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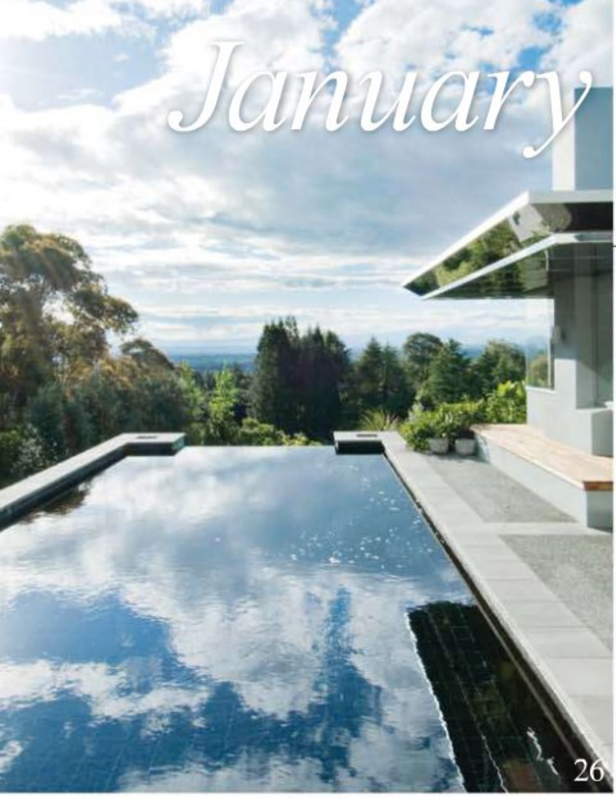

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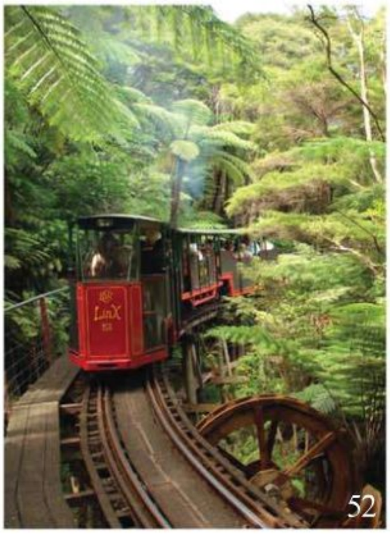

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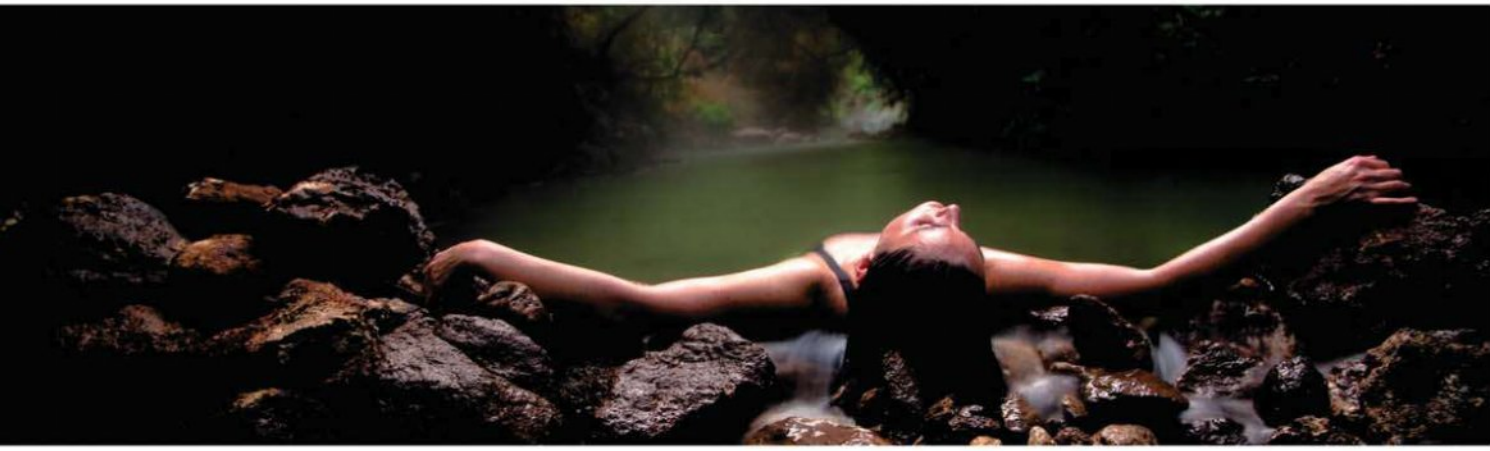

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from the editor

GOODBYE TO THE Noughties and welcome to the Teens. Well, nearly – is 10 a teen? Or do we wait until 2013 to be in the real teens?

Remember when there was no such thing as teenage-hood? Tomorrow I go away for a week with my mother and our plan is to record an oral history about her early life. In preparing for this, it struck me that when she was in her teens the concept of a teenager didn't exist. You were either a child or a young adult – no in-between. The idea that teenagers had wants and needs which were quite different to those of children and adults was unknown. You were too young to be useful and too grown-up to be a child. The emergence of teen culture is a significant cultural shift and with it has come a potent market and a driver of societal change.

With another decade under our belts we can look forward to what this next one will bring. In this issue, celebrating the relaxed summer living of which we New Zealanders are so fond, we have pleasure in introducing Mr Mod himself – Ray Columbus. One of our favourite 1960s sons, Ray is bidding farewell to his Matakana estate before settling into a property requiring less maintenance. He is recovering from a stroke and we wish him an especially healthy New Year.

We feature a Picton bach that seems so familiar it must be the one I stayed in with my great friends the Fuller family of Blenheim back in the 1970s. If it isn't that one, then it must be one of its neighbours. There are not many places where the sound of the waves comes from beneath the house. But that's what happens on this little stretch of the Waikawa inlet. Ah, the serenity…

We had fun with our cover lines for this issue and conducted a straw poll to see how many among us knew the iconic Aussie movie *The Castle* and its catchphrase, "Ah, the serenity". It seems that, after more than a decade, it's still fondly remembered and repeated.

So here's to a joyous, prosperous – and serene – New Year.

Kate

PS We hope you are enjoying our new feature One Last Question, in which we ask an expert about style or entertaining issues around the home. In this issue Sharon Finn of Auckland store Sharondelier talks about using chandeliers inside and out – and, yes, she does mean in the garden.

KATE'S PHOTOGRAPH: MATTHEW WILLIAMS

ABOVE Break all the rules and go shopping for green and blue, the hot new colour combo (page 40). **LEFT** Ray Columbus ends an era and heads for new pastures (page 82).

ON THE COVER Paper lanterns by Martha Stewart at Spotlight; beach towel, multicoloured striped cushions and tray by Citta; jug and glasses from Republic; other accessories privately owned.

STYLING Tracey Strange **PHOTOGRAPH** Belinda Merrie

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introducing

Sybille Hetet
Photo editor

NZ House & Garden's photo editor Sybille Hetet is responsible for sourcing and cataloguing the magazine's many thousands of images. She also answers readers' requests. German-born Sybille first spotted her Kiwi husband John in the rare books room at Cambridge University in England, where she was studying English literature. The couple lived in Hamburg until New Zealand's laid-back lifestyle enticed them to move here for good in 2002. Sybille had spent 20 years working in the magazine industry in her homeland before joining Fairfax in 2004. "I get to indulge my loves in this job – photography, reading and gardening." Several years ago, she also enjoyed a once-in-a-lifetime chance to do up her Auckland house just the way she wanted it. The couple escape to their bach on Great Barrier Island whenever possible – "Though we never seem to get there as often as we'd like."

Lee Suckling
Writer

Keen to make a career for himself in publishing – and despite living a world away from the magazine industry hotspots of New York and London – Lee took the plunge into full-time freelance writing about a year ago. He's dedicated to discovering the best of the South Island – be it a tale from the art world or the location of a new homewares store. His risky jump from steady employment as the content editor of a news website has paid off: alongside his monthly contribution to *NZ House & Garden*'s Urban Eye column, Lee was published in more than 25 magazines in 2009, including some of the country's best-read monthlies and our own *NZ Life & Leisure*. A lifelong "beach bum", Lee starts every day with a walk along Christchurch's Sumner beach with his Irish terrier Archie, before setting himself up to work for the day at one of the seaside suburb's cosy cafes.

Virginia Winder
Writer

After interviewing politicians for a school project at the age of 12, Virginia Winder got hooked on asking questions. A journalist for 27 years, the Taranaki native has spent most of her career writing for newspapers but she's now self-employed, penning articles about gardens, houses, art, science, technology, history and food. She has also taught journalism, written a series of books on immigrant children and taps out a weekly coffee column called *Bean There* for the *Taranaki Daily News*. Virginia lives in central New Plymouth with her school-teacher husband, their two teenage children, a dog, cat and "way too much" art. She loves concerts, festivals, comedy, pub quizzes and All Black test matches and swims in the sea every single day. In this issue, Virginia meets potter Barry Brickell (page 52) and visits the Olivers' Taranaki garden (page 104).

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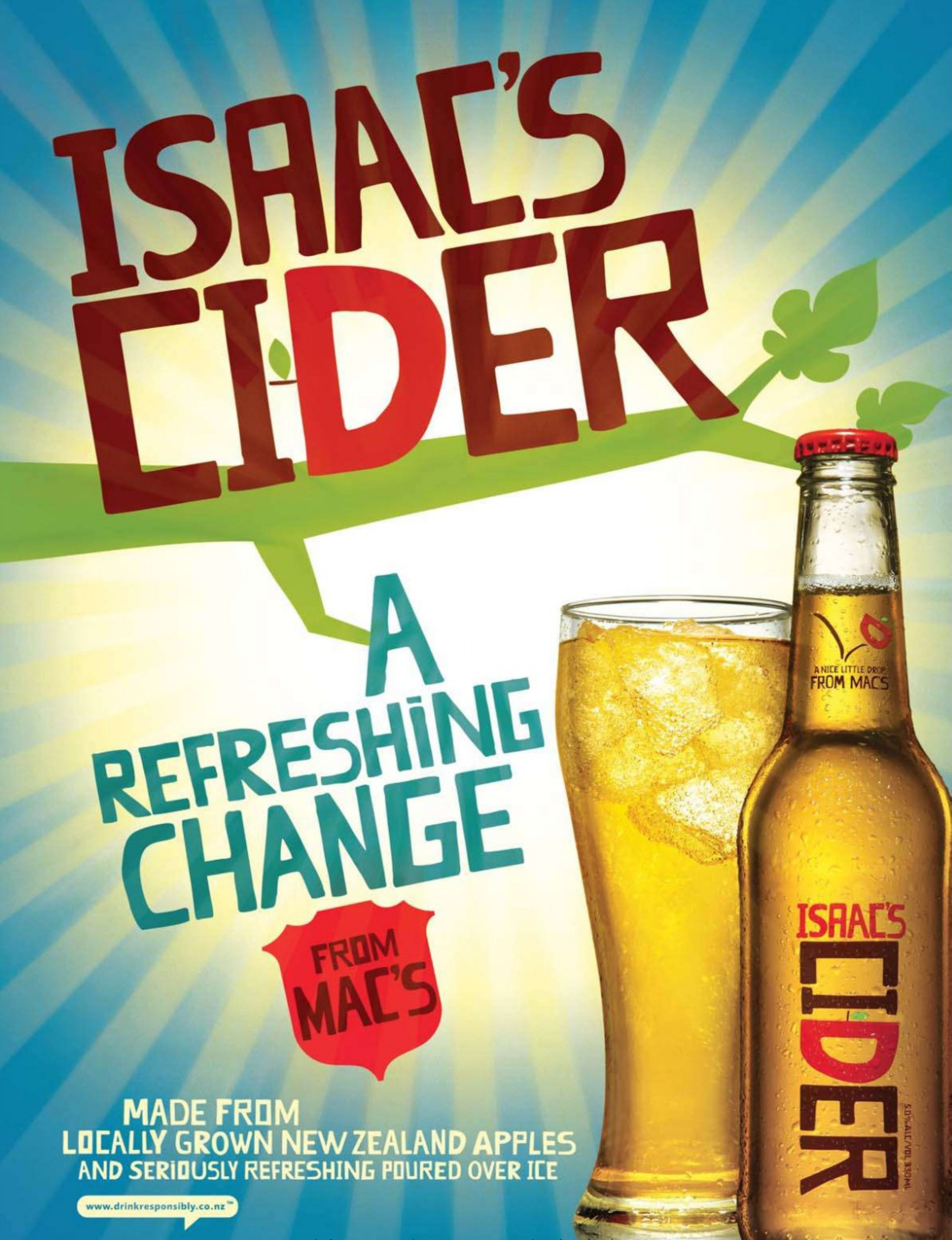

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talk back

ALL IN THE FAMILY

Your December issue certainly was one for the whole family – having so many photographs of kids really got my daughter engaged in helping me to plan Christmas. We spent ages flicking through the cute and novel items you had on show, making lists of what we plan to get people for Christmas. We've decided to go with a white tree this year and, because my daughter's favourite colour is green, she wants all green decorations, just like the tree on page 25. She also thought buying green would help the environment – I had to smile on the inside at that. But the very best feature had to be your Christmas menu. We both love food and it was so much fun looking through all the photos and deciding upon our own menu (which I have to say looks very similar to yours). Thanks for helping spread the joy.

Nessa Perston, Napier

SWEET SUCCESS

I just wanted to let you know that I have almost single-handedly consumed an entire Dream Kisses slice from your *Sweet Memories* recipe feature [Extra Helping, November]. It is hands-down the nicest slice I have ever made/eaten – and believe me I've tried a few!

Kathryn Wright, Welcome Bay

GUILTY PLEASURE

Having just completed another year at university, I am so happy I no longer need to feel guilty about reading anything that isn't a textbook. I recently bought some back issues of *NZ House & Garden* and now I'm once again inspired to paint and decorate a room, as I do every year, and to pay some much-needed attention to my garden for the summer.

Taleah King, Levin

THIRSTY READING

Like your correspondent Belinda [Talk Back, November], I live in Australia. Each month some innate sense tells me it's time to rush to the newsagent for my copy of *NZ House & Garden*. They always tease me relentlessly – "So you're here for your New Zealand fix?" The entire time we've lived here in Victoria it's been in the grip of a 15-year drought, so I look longingly at the beautiful gardens featured.

Dene Douglas, Gisborne, Victoria

RICH PICKINGS

I smiled as I read the *Handmade Antiques* letter in your December Talk Back. I have a recipe book exactly like the one described by Marion Shaw. For 47 years I've added to my once "hard"-covered book, which now has no cover at all. I would be totally lost without it; the recipes are priceless, as a great number of the people I collected them from have now left us, but their recipes remain. For the last 20 years or so I've promised myself I will have a big rewrite, but my family says that it just wouldn't be the same.

Bronwen B, Fairlie, South Canterbury

Editor's note: We'd love to see your ideas/pictures of imaginative ways to collate family recipes. Send them to greg.roughan@fairfaxmags.co.nz and we'll put a selection on our website.

HAMPER HAPPY

I recently helped out a good friend with her wedding and she gave me a wonderful thank you gift hamper which included the latest copy of your magazine. I was instantly in awe of it and all the amazing ideas you feature – especially the novel suggestions for Christmas, as I do like to think outside the box. My son has already picked out the colour of our tree and the colours for the Christmas tree decorations. I have told my partner that it's now my goal to have our house featured in your magazine one day. You have a new reader who just loves what you do.

Nomi Alexandra, Napier

TEST OF TIME

I had been buying *Australian House & Garden* since 1958, when I was 16 years old (time has moved on since then; my husband and I will celebrate 50 years of marriage next year), but I have now discovered *NZ House & Garden* and it has blown me away. Apart from the recipes and beautiful green gardens, the photography has me in awe. I have now been buying your magazine for three years but, like Belinda Reid of Mosman [Talk Back, November], I have found my newsagent only gets about three copies.

Helen Coppand, Kingaroy, Queensland

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KOOL FOR KIDS

As I come from a big family who loves animals, my favourite thing to do with your magazine and my children is play spot the animal. They get two points for being the first to spot a dog and one point for a cat. The kids just love it. It's also wonderful to see all the children featuring in the magazine, which helps my children relate to it. Even though they can't read the articles, they love looking at the pictures and this has turned into quite a valuable teaching tool. They especially like looking at all the cool and funky rooms for kids and often ask if they can have the same. So for Christmas we are giving our children's room a complete makeover and they have both chosen the colour they want.

Luci Kennedy, Taradale, Hawke's Bay

A WHALE OF A TALE

I've been inspired to write to you after reading some of your recent letters. My story relates to a family walk a couple of years ago on the beach here in Paraparaumu. I picked up a piece of driftwood and declared that it looked just like a whale's tail. My husband laughed but my son Dale agreed with me and offered to take it home and varnish it. I was thrilled when a few days later he turned up with the finished piece, complete with plinth. As it was found on our wedding anniversary, he had had a small plaque made with the date on it and it now has a place on top of our corner cabinet. I love it; I'm not sure that my husband agrees but it is a "talking piece".

Joan Imray, Paraparaumu

AT HOME WITH THE RANGE

I loved the *Another 100 Years* story in the December issue. The restored Arrowtown convent (above) looked stunning and seeing the photograph of the Orion Shacklock coal range reminded me of Christmas dinner being cooked on a coal range at my grandmother's Wagga Wagga home in New South Wales. The heat generated by the oven would often rival the 40-degree heat outside, so my family would laze under the jacaranda trees until lunch was ready. Thanks for the Christmas memories.

P Davis, Christchurch

We welcome your feedback: email sally.duggan@nzhouseandgarden.co.nz

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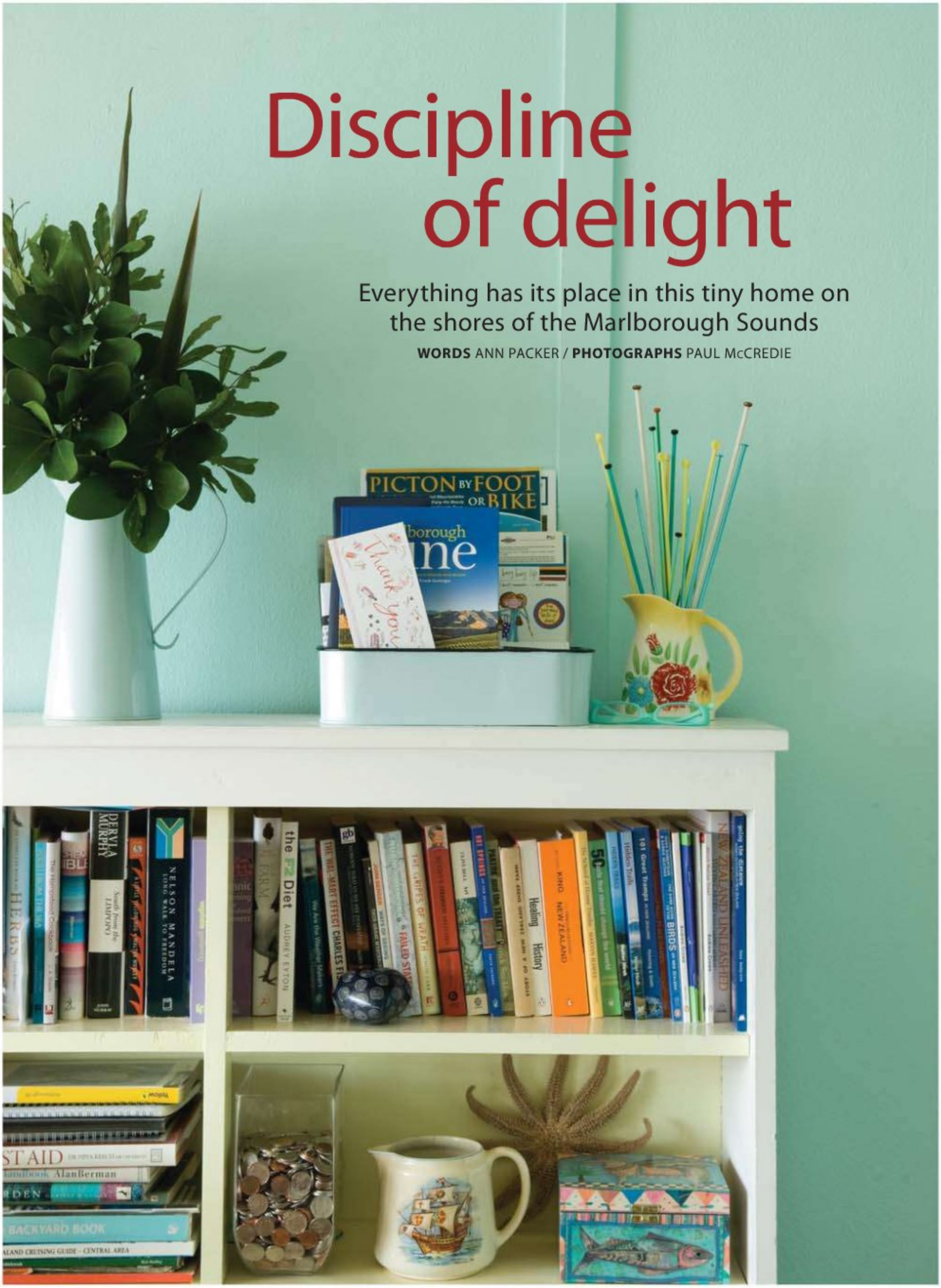
Discipline of delight

Everything has its place in this tiny home on the shores of the Marlborough Sounds

WORDS ANN PACKER / **PHOTOGRAPHS** PAUL McCREDIE



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THESE PAGES Hazel Kirkham and Chris Elphick have embraced the lifestyle changes that came with moving into their Picton bach permanently. Resene 'Half Foam' paint on the walls and seagrass floor matting epitomise that "on holiday" feeling.

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THIS PAGE The fish on the wall is by Blenheim artist Neil Black and the abstract painting above the couch is by Nelson artist Stan Bowski. **OPPOSITE** Allports Island in inner Queen Charlotte Sound is at the centre of the living room's panorama. Hazel arranges native foliage.

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As a little girl, Hazel Kirkham used to say she was going to live in a little house by the sea and go fishing. She hasn't been fishing yet, but she does have the rod.

On a sunny morning it's hard to imagine anything more postcard-perfect than Hazel's Marlborough Sounds waterside bach. It's close enough to her arts consultancy business and the Picton gallery she owned for five and a half years to pop home for lunch, yet sufficiently out on a limb to imagine you're in a holiday home accessible only by boat.

At high tide the waves lap over steps at the bottom of the near-vertical zigzag garden path and, from the living room window, you can spot sea urchins and starfish in the jade green water. There's a minuscule private jetty and an old boathouse where Hazel and partner Chris Elphick – a business consultant who travels around the country – keep their kayaks, along with a couple of camp stools for relaxing on after a daily dip.

But it's as well this couple are small-footprint people, because this isn't just weekend accommodation and compromises have had to be made. There's no TV, no dishwasher and the guest bathroom is a "loo with a view" down the path.

"We like the way you live in a small space," says Hazel, "but it requires a bit more discipline than living in a normal house. You have to have a place for everything and put everything in its place or the house quickly resembles a student crash pad." >

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THIS PAGE (clockwise from above) The lean-to galley kitchen still has its original wood-grain formica benchtop and Zip hot-water cylinder. Hazel made the laminated paper mosaic splashback in the bathroom; the fantail mirror is from Relish Homewares. A tiny guest bedroom is tucked downstairs. Well-used hats line up on the weatherboard wall.

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They have a few rules: anything that comes into the bach has to be second-hand, made by them, bought from Trade Aid or the gallery, "or so wonderful it is an exception to the rules!"

Being perched on leasehold land right on the water's edge – a nearby house fell into the cove a few years ago – only adds to the appeal for this Welsh woman who has made New Zealand home for the last nine years.

Hazel and Chris both grew up in small and often very old houses and their last UK home, in the seaside town of Beaumaris on the island of Anglesey in North Wales, was a 150-year-old stone cottage that had once been an alehouse. Swept along by the idea of having lots of space, they lived in a succession of large homes when they came to New Zealand, but found themselves "rattling around and dreading the fuel bills".

When they bought the 40sqm bach two and a half years ago from the family who built it in the 1950s, they used it as a weekender for the first year. It was only after selling their existing home, with a view to finding something "smaller but with some land to grow veges and fruit", that they settled there by default, after failing to find what they wanted.

"If this wasn't on leased land with all the restrictions, we probably wouldn't have been able to resist major renovations here either," says Hazel. "But the lease prevents us and it's wonderful to be restricted, to have to live with what's here, just as you do on holiday."

The only thing they miss is room to grow food – apart from the mesclun and herbs growing in a wine barrel – so most of their provisions come from the weekly Marlborough Farmers' Market. They also compost food scraps using the Bokashi method, trading it with friends for produce.

Many of the retro items in the bach were already there – chrome dining chairs (since professionally recovered), a sailing ship-patterned lampshade ("it doesn't even get dusted in case it falls apart"), a pale turquoise Bakelite cake container and a Tala cook's measuring cup that holds toothbrushes in the bathroom. The wood-grain laminate benchtop was still in good nick, the cupboards lined with cheerful contact plastic and the bedroom linoleum probably original.

The "lemon meringue" formica dining table was found via a newspaper ad and the convertible lounge suite – found at an auction house and reupholstered after careful deliberation – will never leave, since getting it through the doorway took a lot of coaxing. "If it ever needs recovering, the upholsterers are going to have to do it here," says Hazel.

Recycled furniture and fittings from local second-hand stores, op shops and auction rooms include a formica tea trolley, boomerang table and table lamp, and the pure linen curtains that cover the living room's sliding windows were remade from a curtain found at a Salvation Army shop – saved for the day when there would be a use for it. >

THIS PAGE From the whisk broom and 1960s gondola shopping basket to the old dinghy oar and Annabel Ayers' metal sea horse, every detail is in keeping with the couple's design philosophy. Visitors enjoy spectacular views from the guest loo.

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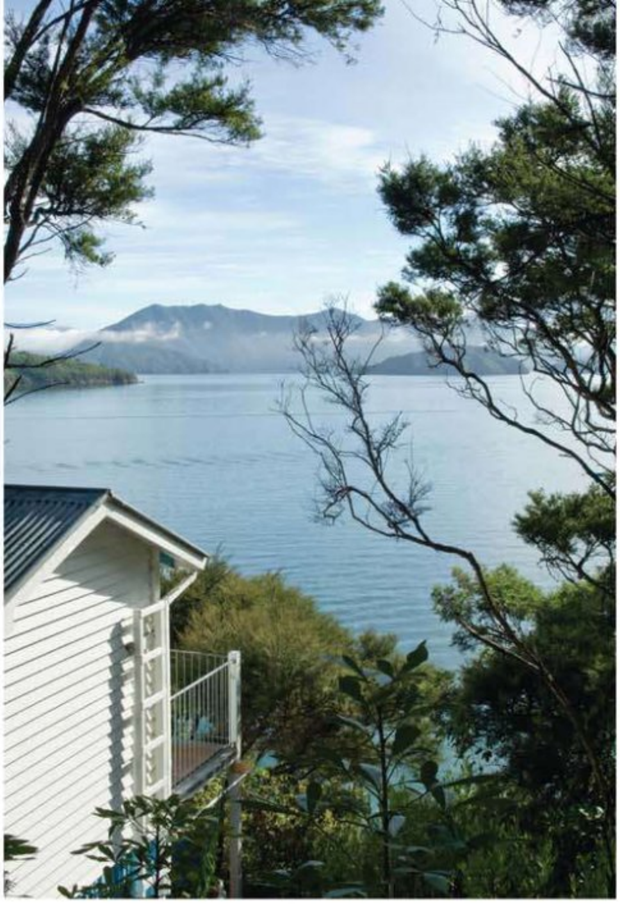

Cushions that complement the cheerful raspberry red, lemon and turquoise colour scheme range from custom-made recycled to irresistible 50s floral and ticking. "We don't worry about things looking perfect," says Hazel, "but they have to feel good."

The only structural alteration was the removal of a wall between two tiny upstairs bedrooms – although Hazel worried that she had somehow damaged the integrity of the place. "In fact it worked wonders. It has plenty of space and lots of light now and we've put in the French doors on to the balcony."

A guest bedroom downstairs that barely accommodates a double bed is "the lower-deck cabin – like a cabin on a boat, but better. This one doesn't roll." The bonus of being down below is proximity to the hot tub – possibly the one real luxury in this think-small lifestyle, apart from the art, most of which came from Oriel, the Picton contemporary art gallery that Hazel reluctantly closed after Easter.

The closing of the gallery may lead to yet another change in living arrangements, but in the meantime the couple own a storage unit about the same size as the bach, crammed with the contents of their old house. "We haven't seen it for 18 months and we haven't missed anything," says Hazel. "So why did we ever buy it? We may just sell everything off."

Chris, who'd always dreamed of living somewhere he could hear the waves while lying in bed, sums it up succinctly. "Life just gets better and happier when you let go of the need to accumulate more stuff, to make you feel you're successful. Small is definitely beautiful." ■

THESE PAGES (from far left) Spectacular views make breakfast on the verandah an occasion every time. Hazel dangles her feet in the water at the bottom of the property; the couple's kayaks are stowed in the little boat shed. The tiny cottage is dwarfed by surrounding trees.

At the moment I am enjoying eating: Moki, baked whole in the oven. We buy our fish from Caroline Anderson, skipper of the *Wairoa*, at the Picton wharf on Saturday mornings.

And drinking: Seresin Leah Pinot Noir.

My best moments in the kitchen are: When we have friends coming around. I never stress over food. My mantra is: fresh, organic, local ingredients; keep it simple and serve it with love.

I love this part of New Zealand because: There is so much variety in the landscape, the weather, the things you can do. And way out in the Sounds there are some really wild and woolly places to get right away from it all.

The first thing I do when I get home from work is: Turn on National Radio. Since we gave up TV we've become big fans of *Nights with Bryan Crump* from 7pm till midnight.

My best moments in the garden are: Few and far between. We're not great gardeners so it's fantastic to be surrounded by Mother Nature's garden, with only the odd weed attack required.

My happiest day in this house was: The day we moved in. We could hardly believe this little gem was ours.

Hazel Kirkham

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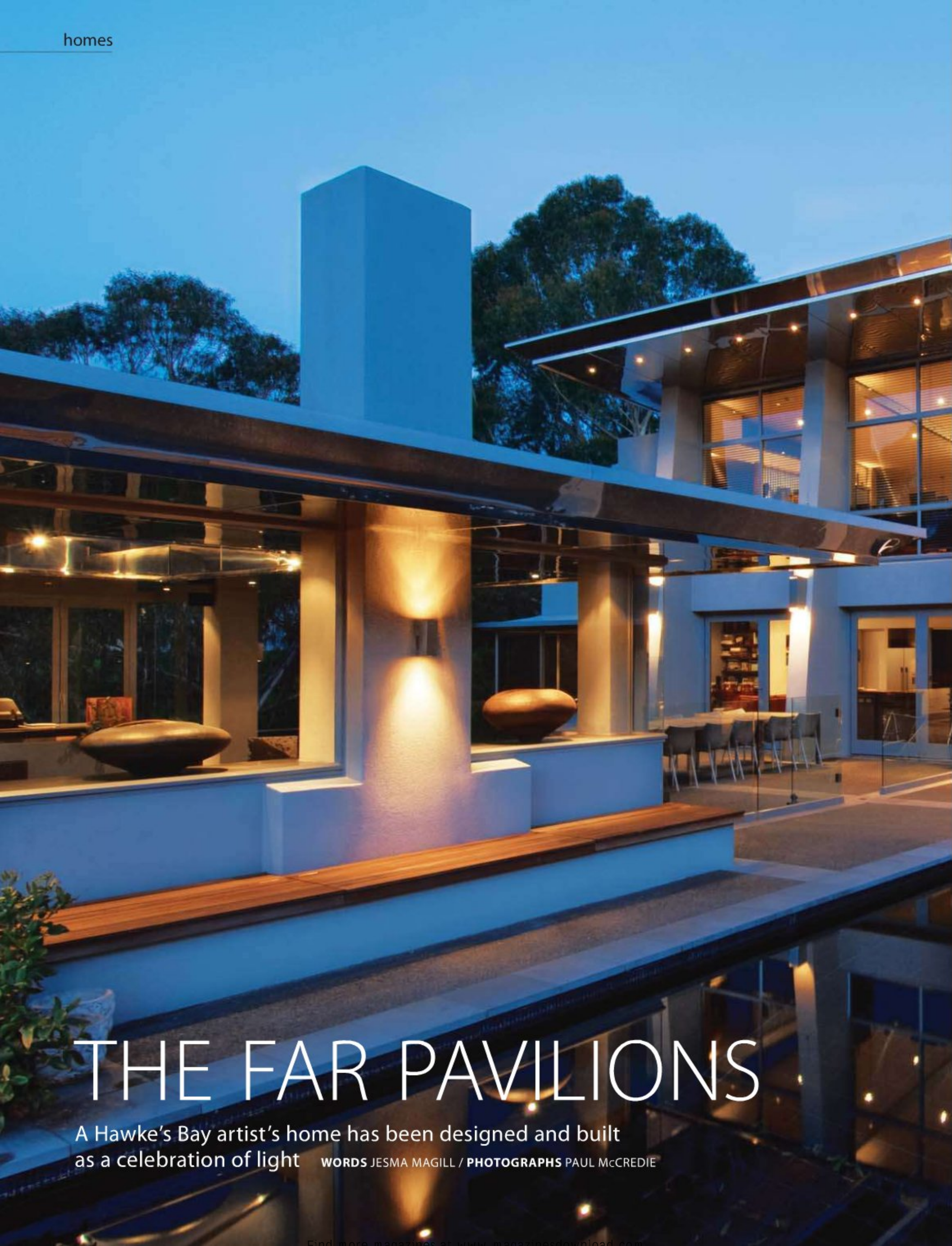

THE FAR PAVILIONS

A Hawke's Bay artist's home has been designed and built as a celebration of light **WORDS** JESMA MAGILL / **PHOTOGRAPHS** PAUL McCREDIE

Find more magazines at www.magazinesdownload.com

At Jane Gray's Havelock North home, light filters into the living areas in the early morning, reflects from the stainless steel eaves and infinity pool during the day and glows from the illuminated interiors at night.

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Two elliptical ceramic pots by Yvette van Raders contrast with the strong lines of the pool pavilion, which has glass walls that fold back in summer; the retro chairs were bought in Sydney and re-covered here in cowhide.

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ARTIST JANE GRAY has the ideal working environment in her Havelock North home – a studio with wonderful views and good light through floor to ceiling windows; a space that feels open to the sky.

"We're surrounded by trees and the house wakes to a sublime dawn chorus," says Jane. "The tui, bellbirds, kereru and fantails compete with quail and pheasant. Then in the evening it's the moreporks' turn."

The 680sqm house is formed by three pavilions, with seven-metre buttress-style pillars, generous open spaces and a private location looking out over Hastings and the Kaweka Ranges. On a clear day, the soaring mountain peaks of Ruapehu, Tongariro and Ngauruhoe put in a special appearance more than 100 kilometres away.

The dozen or so ruggedly beautiful limestone rocks in the garden surrounding the home are more than just garden features, they're family heirlooms.

"The rocks are ancient and full of fossils," says Jane. "We shifted them from my parents' home down the road. Transporting them was a mission, but they look amazing and they contrast beautifully with the Japanese maples." >

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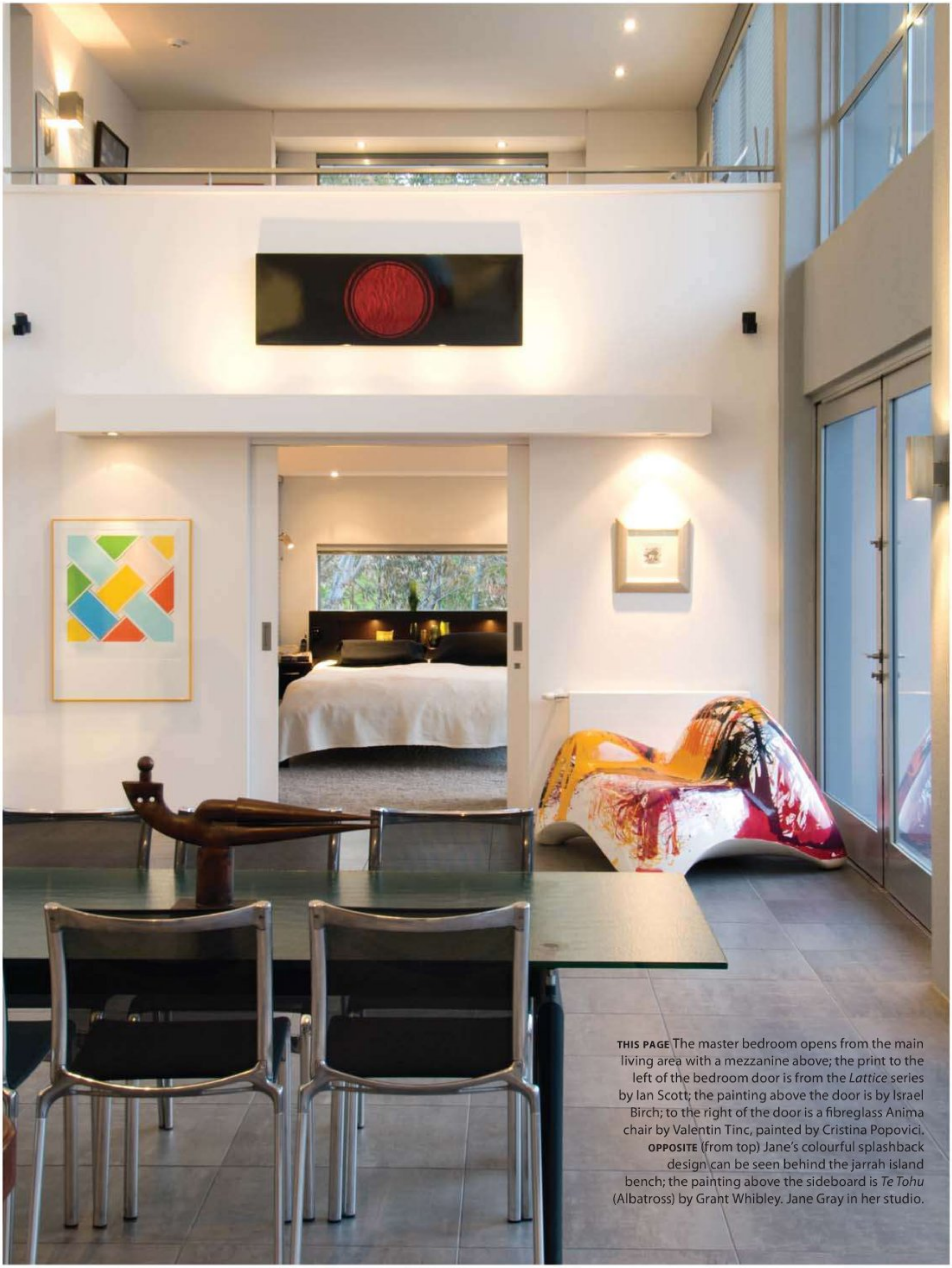

THIS PAGE The master bedroom opens from the main living area with a mezzanine above; the print to the left of the bedroom door is from the *Lattice* series by Ian Scott; the painting above the door is by Israel Birch; to the right of the door is a fibreglass Anima chair by Valentin Tinc, painted by Cristina Popovici. **OPPOSITE** (from top) Jane's colourful splashback design can be seen behind the jarrah island bench; the painting above the sideboard is *Te Tohu* (Albatross) by Grant Whibley. Jane Gray in her studio.

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THIS PAGE (clockwise from top left) Animal-print cushions soften the window seat in a family room that feels as if it is perched in the trees. The master bedroom. One of Jane's paintings hangs above the gas fireplace in the family room. Euan McLeod's *Diver* takes pride of place in the entranceway; a collection of ceramic artworks is displayed on glass shelves by the front doors.

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THIS PAGE (from below) Fox terrier Sevi guards Jane's artworks. The sweeping walkway flows into an open, spacious mezzanine office.

"We love coming home to Hawke's Bay. There are few better places to live such a fulfilling lifestyle"

When it came to deciding on art for their new home, Jane and her husband, Norm, were spoiled for choice. In 2003 Jane opened Wine Country Gallery in Havelock North to represent the work of other New Zealand artists as well as her own. Recently, she closed the gallery doors in order to expand its online catalogue and is now planning local and national "pop-up" exhibitions. So, apart from Jane's own distinctive people-scapes, the walls of the couple's home are hung with their favourite Kiwi art. Some works were purchased and others exchanged for Jane's paintings.

"We seem to have acquired more art over time, with the spaces just calling out for it."

The couple, who grew up in Hawke's Bay, bought the one-hectare property several years before building, so planting was well established by the time building began, softening the hard lines of the design. Steve McGavock, another local, was their architect of choice.

"We've known Steve for years. He loves Hawke's Bay as we do and understood what we were looking for. This is the first home we've built and he encouraged our ideas, which was hugely important to us."

The brief was for a secluded family space with room for both to work from home. "We wanted the living spaces and master suite to be on one level flowing out to the pool and loggia spaces and then, upstairs, a studio for me and an office for my husband.

"We've achieved all that brilliantly, with our own separate spaces and extra bedrooms and bathrooms for returning family and the loads of friends we have to stay."

The pool pavilion, also known as the outdoor lounge, is accessed from the living areas and used all year round. Wired for sound, it features a barbecue and open wood fire. The third pavilion – accessible from the car court and internally via the family room – has a guest bedroom and en suite plus an extra space currently used as a small gallery.

The house sits on a ridge, flanked by deep gullies and mature trees (mostly Australian gums) that swish and sway and screen the house from the road. >

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The infinity pool can be heated for year-round use.

The best time of the week for me is: Life is pretty good so there are lots, but I am pretty keen on Monday morning, believe it or not. You can start another new week, planning all that needs to be done and believing you will achieve it.

And the worst time is: Probably Friday, when you realise you haven't done everything you were meant to, but what the heck – it's the weekend.

At the moment I am enjoying eating: Asparagus – we're very blessed with produce in Hawke's Bay; right now [mid-November], courtesy of our South Island friends, we're also enjoying whitebait.

And drinking: Viognier.

My best moments in the kitchen are: Most of our cooking is done in the pavilion beside the pool, where we spend a lot of time.

A quote that I often use is: Do chickens have lips?

I love this part of New Zealand because: We love Hawke's Bay and we both grew up here. The only downside is that our children all live away, hence the house that accommodates them all.

The thing I want to change next around the house is: The house has been built to suit our requirements perfectly. We wouldn't do anything differently.

Jane Gray

The home appears transparent from the front entry with its huge double glass doors flanked by fitted internal shelves laden with ceramic artworks. Inside, the double-storey atrium reveals yet more art, providing a rich diversion from the view shaft that leads to the infinity pool and beyond. A background palette of grey Italian floor tiles, dark timber furniture and soft white walls allows the art to grab the limelight.

"We have a very individual house, built to a precise – and I mean precise – description. We have used the best materials because this place is built with permanence and craftsmanship in mind. Steve's a stickler for perfection and well known for it." And he has been acknowledged for it too: the property was judged a winner in the 2008 New Zealand Institute of Architects regional awards.

The home's gathering point is the kitchen's deep red jarrah island bar. It's nearly five metres long and one metre wide – large enough to accommodate the entire family with newspapers spread out and room to spare. The vibrant multicoloured splashback is the artist's own creation.

The couple's long-term plan is to build another home on a parcel of land just down the hill. "I know, mad!" says Jane of their intention to build again. "But we're thinking of a 'mini-me' – a smaller version of the original design that will give us more freedom. With our children living away and work commitments around the country, we feel like we're travelling all over the planet. We want to simplify our life.

"We love coming home to Hawke's Bay. There are few better places to live such a fulfilling lifestyle and, as long as I have a great studio and the boys have somewhere for their toys, we're happy."

Wine Country Gallery's next exhibition is at Elephant Hill Estate Winery in Te Awanga, Hawke's Bay, January 29 to February 19; winecountrygallery.com

See more of this home at nzhouseandgarden.co.nz

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Crystal gazing

A Lalique vase exemplifies perfection

WORDS & STYLING TRACEY STRANGE / **PHOTOGRAPH** BELINDA MERRIE

It's special enough to be considered an heirloom, a family treasure that is handed down through generations. And this Lalique crystal vase also scores points for exemplary craftsmanship. It's perfect, from its timeless shape to the handcrafted frosted birds that encircle it. We love its classicism and its non-showy beauty. Time to start saving... Lalique Dampierre vase $1685 from Cavit & Co, (09) 358 3771. Marble table stylist's own.

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Go for gold

Gold and black is a timeless combination in any room

STYLING TRACEY STRANGE / **PHOTOGRAPHS** BELINDA MERRIE

Midas touch. Philippe Starck **ornament** $195 from Indice, (09) 376 9167.

Pan for gold. Deep **bowl** $181 from Cabana Outdoor Design, (07) 575 5797.

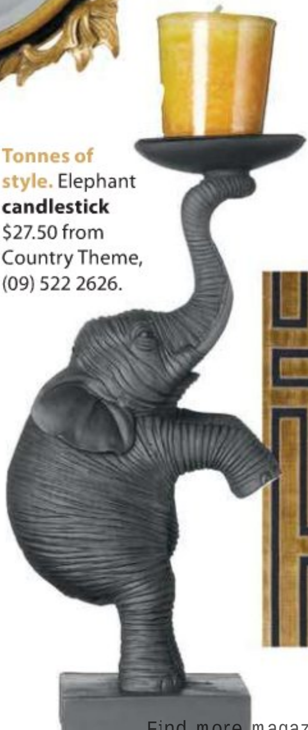
On the wire. Lamp $605 from Kirkcaldie & Stains, (04) 472 5899.

Golden girls. Glamour Ladies **cushion** $330 (for two) from Living Quarters, (07) 579 1130.

Circle of life. Eagle **mirror** $720 from CC Interiors, for stockists contact (09) 589 1950.

Miami vice. Palm tree **candlestick** $259 (for set of three) from Corso de' Fiori, (09) 307 9166.

Visions of gold. Frame $49 from Republic, (09) 361 1137.



Tonnes of style. Elephant **candlestick** $27.50 from Country Theme, (09) 522 2626.

Heart of gold. Etched heart **ornament** $71.50 (for set of three) from Harrowset Hall, (09) 524 4452.

Make a mint. Lizzo 'Minos' **fabric** through Vivace, (09) 523 0325.

Coffee rings. '9 carat' **mug** $35 from Askew, (09) 378 1414.

MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: TRINE THORSEN/GETTY IMAGES

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Forget familiar storylines, predictable endings and mediocre performances, Rialto Channel offers 20 new films every month sourced from the world's leading independent filmmakers and producers, including 'Vicky Cristina Barcelona' the story of two American women, who fall in love with the same Spanish painter, who is still in love with his emotionally unstable ex-wife.

For the more challenging option, choose Rialto Channel.
www.rialtochannel.co.nz. To subscribe call 0800 759 123

RIALTO CHANNEL 25 SKY

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Full flora. Designers Guild Darly **wallpaper** in Indigo, sofa in Designers Guild Willament **fabric** in Duck Egg, both through Icon Textiles, (09) 302 1653.

Two-tone time. Blue and green **throw** $59 from Republic, (09) 361 1137.

Love that. Blue LO and green VE **cushions** $159 (for a pair in the same colour) from Republic, (09) 361 1137.

Squared off. **Plate** $166 from Ambiance Interiors, (09) 523 2240.

Ripe for the picking. Handmade ceramic **pear** $19 from Alfresco, (09) 309 3643.

Blue for you. Vase $49.50 from Corso de' Fiori, (09) 307 9166.

Mixed blessings

Accessorise your home in blue and green – the season's hottest colour combination

STYLING TRACEY STRANGE / **PHOTOGRAPHS** BELINDA MERRIE

Give it the green light. Teak **lamp** and **shade** $599 from Republic, (09) 361 1137.

Green-scent. Hervé Gambs **candle** $110 from Tessuti, (09) 378 8490.

Going up. Kenzo Caméléon **fabric** through Vivace Textiles, (09) 523 0325.

The big chill. Ice cream **dish** $16.95 from Nest, (09) 361 5555.

Wings and wax. Portus Cale **candle** $52 from Alfresco, (09) 309 3643.

Green devotion. Ceramic **cross** $32.50 from Republic, (09) 361 1137.

Rounded out. Glass **vase** $49.95 from Nest, (09) 361 5555.

Felt fine. Donna Wilson "doily" **place mat** $49.50 from Tessuti, (09) 378 8490.

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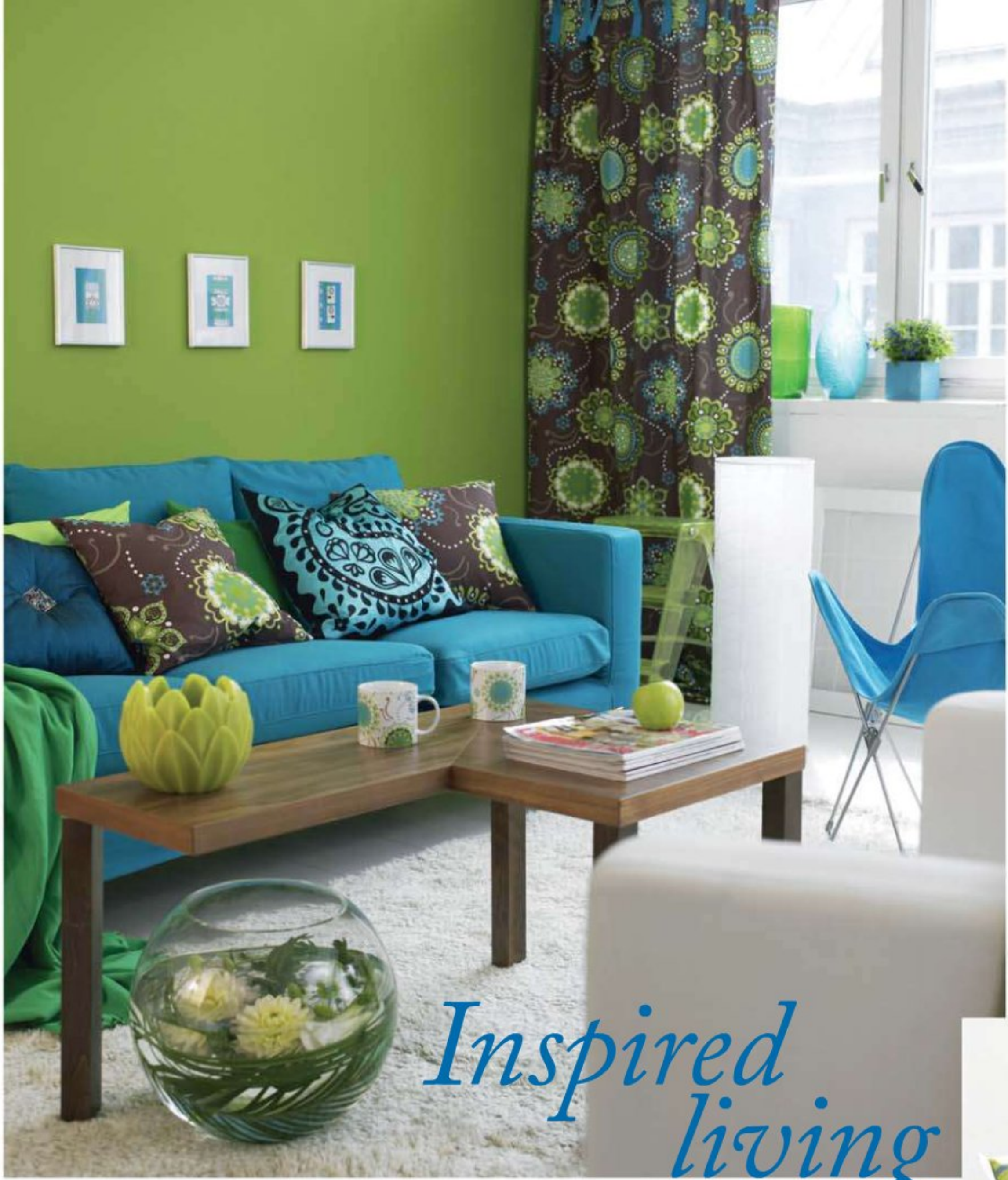

COLOURS OF NEW ZEALAND™

Inspired living

There's a time and place for bright, bold wall colours; children's bedrooms, family living spaces, funky city pads and vintage villas all come alive in response to a colour injection. And whether it's the paint shade that influences your furnishings and accessories, or vice versa, you'll find a world of inspiration on the Dulux Colours of New Zealand™ Palettes.

"We know New Zealanders have a great love for our stunning natural environment and that's reflected in this range," says Dulux colour expert Gretchen Flynn.

"Our oceans, mountains, beaches, native bush – even our urban landscapes – all inspire hues that work beautifully within our homes. The wall paint in this room evokes New Zealand's lush, green, grassy spaces, from rural pastures to city backyards, with the furniture, curtains, cushions and vases introducing elements of earth and sky."

At Dulux, you'll find an extensive range of inspiring and timeless paint colours as well as expert advice. Qualified colour consultants are available nationwide to help you achieve a fabulous new look for any room in the house. To arrange a consultation with one of their professional colour consultants, visit the website: www.dulux.co.nz or call 0800 800 424.

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Dulux

Worth doing, worth Dulux.

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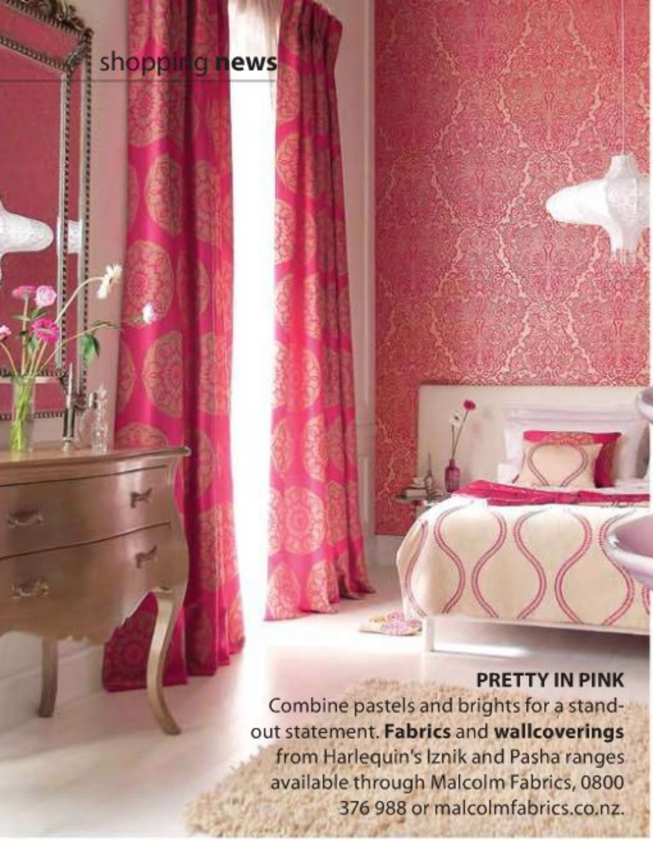

PRETTY IN PINK
Combine pastels and brights for a stand-out statement. **Fabrics** and **wallcoverings** from Harlequin's Iznik and Pasha ranges available through Malcolm Fabrics, 0800 376 988 or malcolmfabrics.co.nz.

JUST ADD TEA
Perfect for cupcakes, this **cakestand** is $115.50 from Tessuti, (09) 378 8490.

AND SO TO SLEEP...
Brocade embroidered **cushion** $90.20 from Notting Hill Interiors, (07) 883 1777.

Pastels shine

Our style editor shares news and views from the home stores

"When gentle pastels are mixed with neutrals, then combined with organic and natural fibres, the end result is always a relaxed yet sophisticated look. Best of all, it is a look that can be used in every room in the house"

– JANE BENTLEY, MALCOLM FABRICS

WE LOVE...
...these pretty pastel **candles** $15 each from Askew, (09) 378 1414.

DINE IN STYLE
Finding stylish, contemporary **napkin holders** isn't always easy. Some of the best we've seen are by Le Jacquard Francais. Elegantly simple, they come in a variety of colours, $10.50 each from Tessuti, (09) 378 8490.

THREE OF THE BEST... *Fabrics*

SWEET
Ashley Wilde's Secret Garden fabric through Charles Parsons, 0800 651 112.

SYLVAN
Fibre Naturelle's Classic Crewel fabric through Vivace Textiles, (09) 523 0325.

SUBDUED
Harlequin's Fortuna Oreille fabric through Malcolm Fabrics, 0800 376 988.

PHOTOGRAPHS: BELINDA MERRIE; MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: MALCOLM FABRICS

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Stay a while

A welcoming guest bedroom is a haven for out-of-towners

WORDS & STYLING TRACEY STRANGE / **PHOTOGRAPH** BELINDA MERRIE

OUTFIT THE BED
Sleeping pillows, both firm and soft, and larger pillows to prop up the head while reading provide the essential elements of comfort. A pretty, fresh-looking duvet will also make your guests feel as if you've gone to a little extra effort. Pan Cottage Florence queen **duvet cover set** (includes two pillowcases) $375 and ticking queen **sheet** $145, all from Household Linens, (09) 366 0712; panne velvet Snowdrop **pillow shams** (at back) $60 each from Anami Textiles, (09) 307 1593; floral **cushion** (at front) covered in Ybarra's Ran fabric available through Decortex e Famiglia, (09) 303 3545.

TIMELESS BEAUTY
The most relaxing rooms are those with an element of classic timelessness. Painted shutters are beautiful and functional – and light can be easily controlled at any time of the day.

PERSONAL TOUCH
Choose a few special objects to adorn bedside tables. A lamp, a scented candle and a simple vase of flowers are welcoming but not too personal. Glass **vase** $5 from Vida Flores (09) 523 5454; Voluspa **candle** $45 from Hedgerow, (09) 524 0843; lamp stylist's own.

LIFE'S LITTLE LUXURIES
A warm throw, clean towels and beautifully scented soaps laid out on the bed will make your guests feel at home. **Throw** $219 from Trumps of Remuera, (09) 520 1215; **hand towel** $17.40 and **facecloth** $7, both from Linens & More, 0800 546 367; Tuberose **soap** $15 from Hedgerow, (09) 524 0843.

SPACE FOR ESSENTIALS
Clear out bedside table drawers so guests can tuck away jewellery and reading glasses. Bedside table stylist's own but similar reproduction French-style **furniture** can be sourced through Le Forge, (09) 815 5909.

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Ooh la la

Elegant antiques from France are shipped to New Zealand by the container-load

WORDS PAM NEVILLE
STYLING TRACEY STRANGE
PHOTOGRAPHS BELINDA MERRIE

19th century French mirror with original mirror glass and wooden painted frame showing remnants of gilt $1250, Louis XVI-style chair circa 1900 (part of a three-piece setting $6000) and toile de Nantes cushion $275, all from Bashford Antiques, (09) 361 5142.

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Antique French stone lion $3850 for a pair from Bashford Antiques, (09) 361 5142.

Buyers love the fineness of French design and the restraint and elegance of the furniture

In most parts of New Zealand there is an antiques dealer who does an annual trawl of France, buying up old iron gates, wooden window shutters, double beds, dining tables, chandeliers, porcelain tableware, religious statues and anything else a householder might desire for sale back home.

Some of them, such as Nick Ferneyhough and Chrystelle Baran of Auckland and Wayne and Diane Wright of Christchurch, have second homes in France. Some are native Frenchmen, like Philippe Gallais of Philippe's French Antiques, Auckland.

But most of the traders are not too different from tourists, happy to tour the country's brocantes (second-hand shops or markets). Often such tourists/buyers will hire one of the ubiquitous white vans that fill the streets near most brocantes. Then the finds of the day can be driven back to base – perhaps to a rented storage shed or a garage behind a small hotel – to await collection and shipping to New Zealand.

Buyers back home love the fineness of French design and the restraint and elegance of the furniture. The French make it easy by continuing to manufacture their classic designs long after the original designers are gone, so buyers need to understand the terms dealers use, such as "in the style of". A faded parquet table top or a garden urn with wear and tear might look 150 years old but could be brand new. Even versions of the famous brass and tortoiseshell marquetry tables of André-Charles Boulle are still made. A close look at the construction and fittings usually tells the story.

Not that age always matters. It's the French style we love, whether in classic dark furniture, light-coloured painted dining tables, ladder-backed chairs, embroidered linen or colourful ceramics.

Planning your own buying trip? *NZ House & Garden* recently visited a couple of locations in Provence worth considering. L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, a pretty little town straddling a river, has as many as 300 dealers from all over France setting up shop only on Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays. And Carpentras, a town near the city of Avignon, has a Friday antiques market as well as a colourful flea market every Sunday. A hotchpotch of about 150 second-hand dealers set up their wares on rugs, sacks, tables and truck decks in a sprawling market that fills a riverside car park.

Now, how to fit an antique washbasin and a metre-high crucifix in your luggage? ■

1 MANTEL CLOCK

This ornate gilt French mantel clock, circa 1890, is on sale at Wayne Wright Antiques, Christchurch, for $2750. (03) 366 1116, waynewright.co.nz.

2 TUREEN AND LADLE

This big oval serving tureen and ladle are from a collection of old French porcelain tureens at Auckland's Vintage Antiques. Prices range from $150 to $500 (this one is $450); the ladle is $79. (09) 480 4814, vintageantiques.co.nz.

3 WINE MEASURE

Cherry Orchard Antiques, Wellington, specialises in French country antiques. This winemaker's "demi-hectolitre", an old wooden measure, circa 1900, is on sale for $450. (04) 499 8533.

4 BOULES AND COASTER

Old French boules (bowling balls) are used for decoration in this rare English antique mahogany cheese coaster, circa 1800, used for pushing large rounds of cheese along grand dining tables. It is still in fine order, including its tiny wooden wheels. $750 at Walterwoods Antiques, Masterton, where a range of old boules is also available. (06) 377 4385.

5 JARDINIÈRE

Cherry Orchard Antiques has this cast-iron jardinière, $565. (04) 499 8533.

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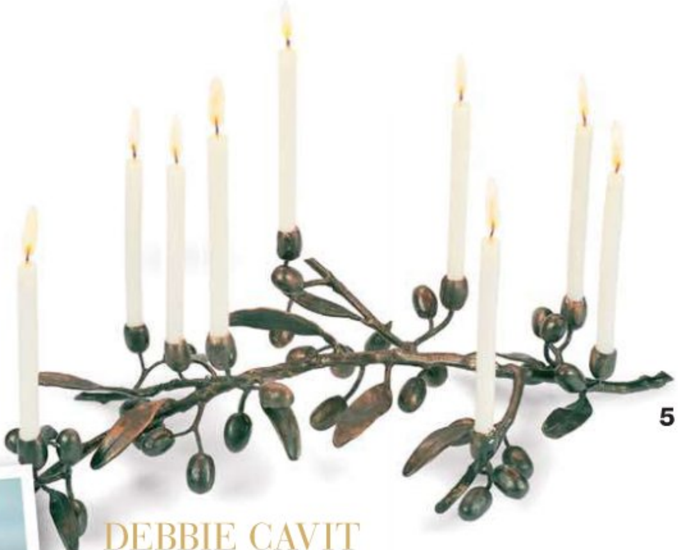

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DEBBIE CAVIT

Managing Director, Cavit & Co

With its regal red brick, impressive peaks and graceful arched windows, the historic Foundation for the Blind building has graced Parnell for more than a century. And for over 18 years, Debbie Cavit's retail store, Cavit & Co, has occupied a space there, front and centre. It's a good match. Cavit & Co's extensive ranges of furniture, linen and homeware are carefully chosen by Debbie and her team of designers to stand the test of time.

"From our Ralph Lauren and Baker collections to our Frette linen and William Yeoward crystal, everything in the store is very much what I would describe as classic contemporary," says Debbie. "Whether it's a bed, dresser, sofa, chair or something as simple and beautiful as a beaten copper pear, made by LA-based artisan Robert Kuo, these are pieces created by some of the world's top designers – pieces our customers take home and love for life."

If you don't see quite what you're looking for in the store, discuss it with Debbie. With her team of talented designers, and a worldwide network of contacts, she will either find it or make it for you. "It doesn't matter what look or style our clients want, we specialise in interpreting those ideas. We know that people are looking to create environments that bring them joy, that are suited not only to the architecture of their home, but also to the people who live there."

As you would expect, Debbie's job frequently takes her to the top international furniture and fabric trade fairs. This year, she says, New York and Belgium have been highlights. "As a design resource, it's wonderful to be exposed to so much creative thinking. And it's always inspiring to come home knowing we can share that," says Debbie. "Whether you've seen something during your own travels, or loved a look in a magazine – come in and talk to us. We can make it happen."

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1 William Yeoward globe **vases**, two sizes available in Amethyst (pictured) or Amber. **2** Michael Aram Ginko **salad servers**. **3** Coup de Sabre **lounge chair** by Jacques Garcia for McGuire Furniture, makers of fine rattan furniture; McGuire also have a collection of outdoor furniture. **4** Lalique Bacchantes **vase** designed by Rene Lalique in 1927; also available in Amber. **5** Olive branch **menorah** from Michael Aram. **6** Gilbert **dining table,** available with a leather or marble top in two sizes, pictured here with Paloma **dining chairs**, Chimera **chandelier** and Tower **bookcases,** all designed by Baxter Furniture from Italy. **7** McGuire armchair designed by Laura Kirar. **8** Frette Italian **bedlinen** is renowned as the finest in the world.
Exclusively from Cavit & Co, 547a Parnell Rd, Auckland, (09) 358 3771, www.cavitco.com.

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"Cavit & Co is much more than one store. Our designers and our contacts around the world enable us to custom-design and source unique home furnishings for our customers"

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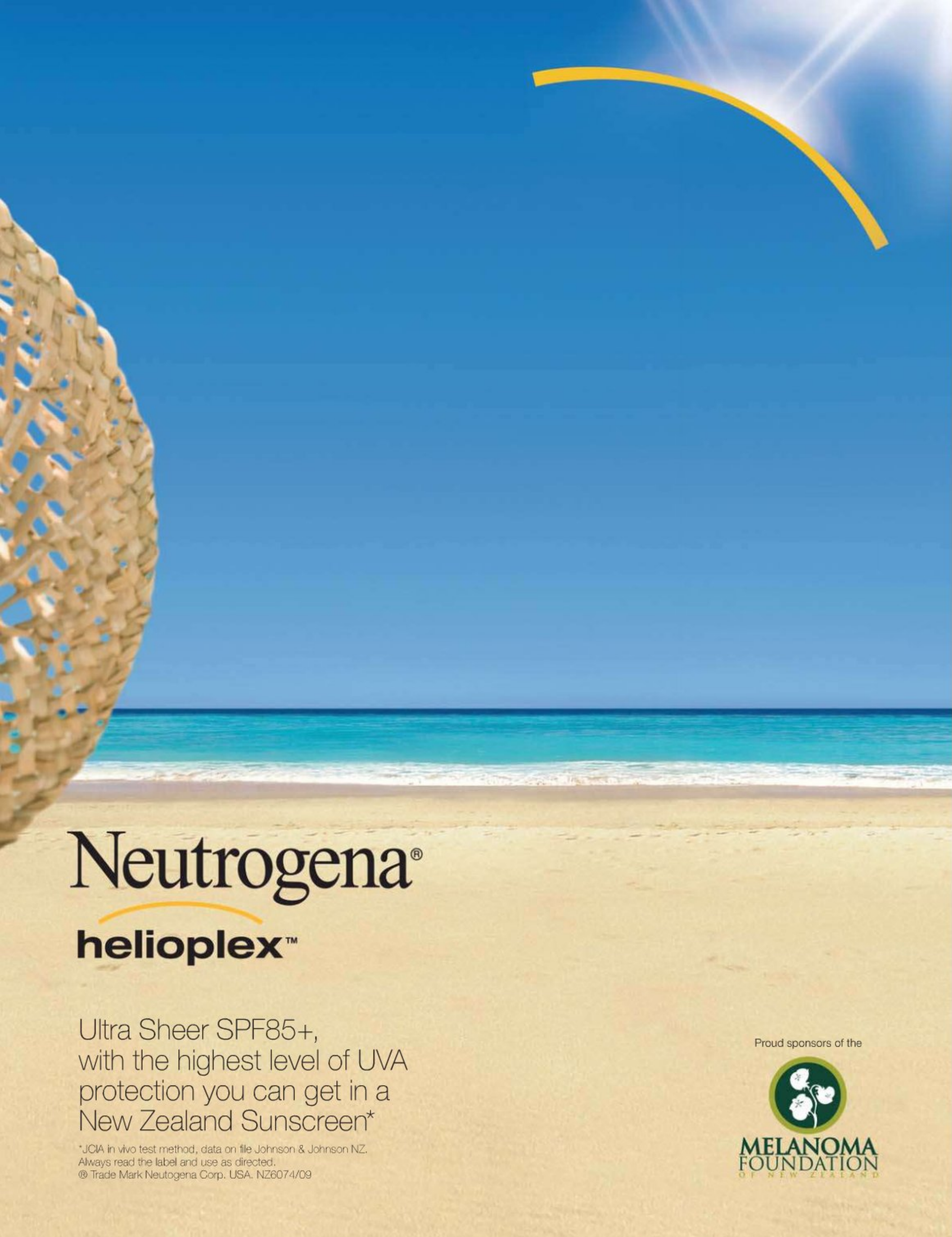

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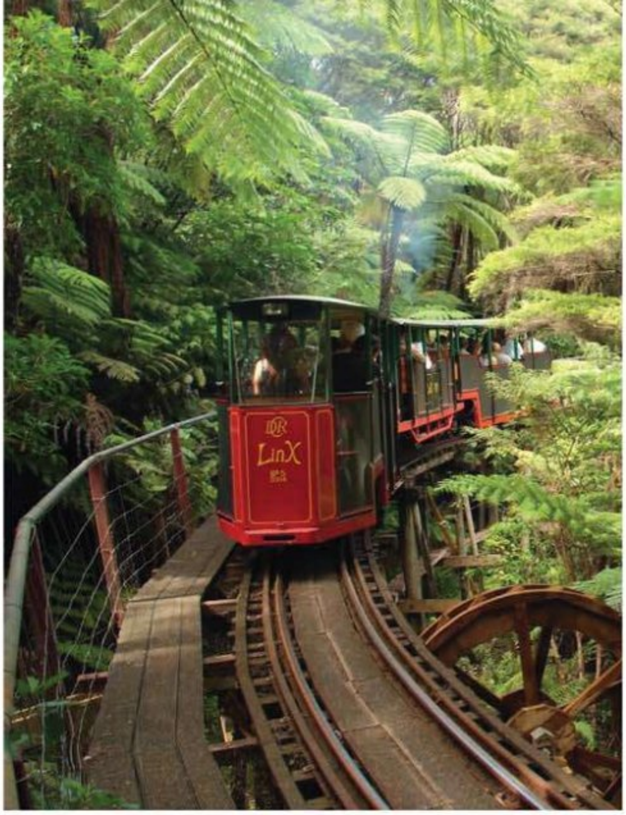

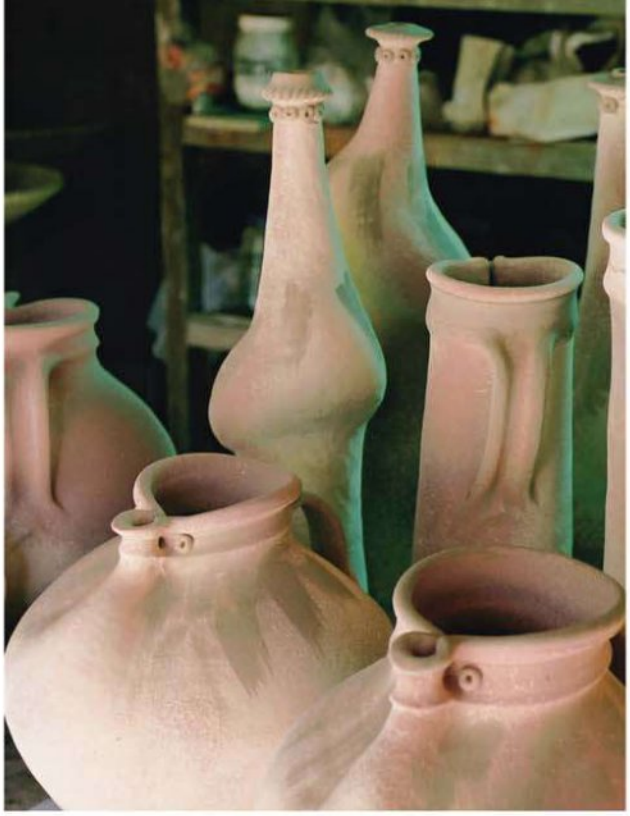

Earth and fire

Potter and conservationist Barry Brickell has built and shaped his legacy from Coromandel soil

WORDS VIRGINIA WINDER / **PHOTOGRAPHS** PAUL McCREDIE & GIL HANLY

BARRY BRICKELL IS getting younger by the minute. At first meeting in the Driving Creek Railway ticket and pottery gift shop, the slight 74-year-old shows his years. Though his arms – bare beneath an Aussie rules shirt and a brown woollen vest – are strong and sinewy, his hands are gnarled, his back slightly stooped and his face weathered by the elements.

But in his tiny work shed, a compact world turned beige by clay dust, heavy rain rumbling on the roof, the stories begin and the years fall away. His mood becomes expansive and his movements fluid. He seems to rework himself with stories of earth and steel, clay and fire.

The Coromandel potter, railway builder and forest planter starts with flames. As a kid growing up in Devonport on Auckland's North Shore, he was a private pyromaniac, lighting fires in tins beneath the family's wooden villa. "I wanted to savour the scent of smoke, of things burning, the lick of flames – to me that was beautiful."

Not far away, Barry discovered another source of fascination in Devonport's Victorian gasworks and adjoining fire brickworks. The mesmerised youngster used to slip inside unseen and race up and down ladders like a shadow.

"That's where I really educated myself about furnaces, fire, refractories and plastic clay. There was ancient machinery, huge blazing furnaces, sweating men stoking kilns and managing the gasworks, coal-fired furnaces, steam engines and boilers. The smell of the gasworks was highly aromatic – a magic place."

It was school art lessons that led him to his love of clay. At primary school, a teacher brought a crude potter's wheel to class. One boy would crank the machine and the other would try to make a pot. "I got captivated."

By then, Barry was already an avid artist. "I was drawing from very early on. I was always sketching and drawing."

He also felt the pull of the earth in other ways – usually drawing him to the wilds of Birkenhead. "I was mad on native plants and conservation. I would ride for miles on my bike up to the nearest place to find native plants in their natural environment. There was nothing in the whole of Devonport except suburbia. [In those days] every native plant, tree and shrub had been banished."

On one excursion, the engineering beauty of a railway line stopped him in his tracks. "A well-constructed railway is like poetry in the landscape," he says. >

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THIS PAGE (clockwise from left) Barry Brickell in his office; he has developed an extensive narrow-gauge mountain railway, a working pottery and wildlife sanctuary. A terracotta mural at the number three tunnel. Unnamed oil paintings by Barry. The entrance buildings at Coromandel's Driving Creek Railways and Potteries. Barry holds one of his salt-glazed beakers.
OPPOSITE A new train, *Linx*, on the number one viaduct. Some of Barry's sculptural pottery forms.

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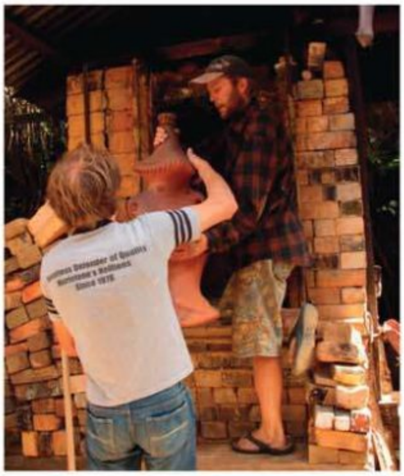

Later, at the University of Auckland, he studied botany and geology – his parents' idea. "I would never have gone to university had my father and mother not pushed me. I would have been a potter instead, living a simple, rugged life in a bush hut somewhere all alone, making art and pots."

His father, a civil engineer, wanted his son to get a degree, then a good job, a house, marriage and children. "My father had massive ambitions for me. He didn't know that his eldest son was left-handed and arty and a happy loner. He tried to normalise me."

But Barry had other ideas and other influences. While at university, he went to Colin McCahon's Thursday evening painting classes and never missed any of the artist's exhibitions. He even owned a couple of his paintings once, but had to sell them to pay taxes.

Barry followed his own pottery dreams and eventually headed to Coromandel, where all his childhood learnings and leanings have been put to work. And how he has worked. In 1973, Barry bought 24 hectares of scrubland, covered with kanuka and pine, near Coromandel town. With an Arts Council grant and a promise to teach others how to create with clay, he began to build his potteries and railway.

"It took 32 years to build the railway. I don't know why I've got any arms and legs left on me; they should've all fallen off by now, the amount of shovelling I've done. I've bent hundreds of rails, done up thousands of bolts, dug umpteen truckloads of dirt…"

It all began as a 200-metre track to transport clay and pinewood for use in the potteries.

"Pinewood is the fastest burning and hottest of all woods for firing stoneware kilns. You can reach 1350°C on dry pine and we do that frequently round here. That's the steel melting point at which stoneware needs to be fired to get the glazes running properly."

He got his rails at below scrap price when the Waikato coal mines closed down. "Lucky I did because you can't get it now unless you import it."

Then he got building. "I'm an early riser. I loved getting up at crack of dawn and working on the railway before breakfast and then after work in the evenings, especially in summer. I'd go up there with a good bottle of wine and some cheese and carry on working on the railway till dark. In between I'd make pots and sell them – hopefully."

That modest little railway has now grown into a winding 3km route through replanted native bush – a thriving tourist attraction. An articulated railcar chugs visitors through the potteries, a sepia vision of sculptures and furnaces reminiscent of a Disney ride, except the artefacts here are real. From there it clatters on past silver ferns, towering mamaku, nikau palms, drooping rimu, miro, rewarewa and kauri, the air sweet with the astringent scent of kanuka.

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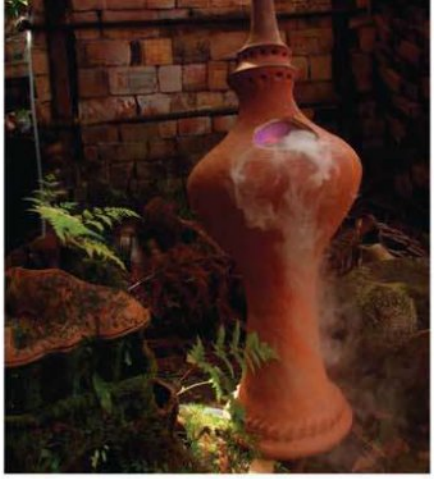

THIS PAGE (clockwise from above) One of Barry's sculptures, complete with electrical mist-maker. Barry works on a coiled sculpture in his studio. Driving Creek worker Carol Schachte sends off a train with a whistle. Fatso and Thinso jugs by Barry. **OPPOSITE** (clockwise from left) Some of Barry's work, including a moss fountain (right), in the sculpture garden. The *Snake* pulls into the station beside the kiln. The bookshop. Chris Ingraham and Erik Omundson (right) stack the salt-glaze kiln.

Beside the track and in the bush are pots, sculptures, clay murals and glassware, some created by Barry, but many by the artists who are part of the Driving Creek cooperative.

Up, up, up goes the railcar to the Eyefull Tower, where, legend has it, it's possible to see the tip of Auckland's Sky Tower on a clear day.

This former scrubland has been replanted with 20,000 native trees – half of them kauri – in a bid to undo the damage done by gum diggers, gold diggers and farmers. Now under the care of the QEII National Trust, it can never be sold off, ensuring that Barry's legacy remains for all time.

The Brickell stamp doesn't stop there. In 1997, he established the Driving Creek Wildlife Sanctuary Trust and a vermin-proof fence has been built around 1.7ha of land beside the potteries. Native species, including frogs, lizards, insects, birds, plants and fish (there is a pond) are slowly being introduced into the protected space. Barry says it's even likely that two takahe will find sanctuary there.

Though the potteries, his art, the railway, native forest and the wildlife reserve would be more than enough to leave behind, Barry has other projects on the go. He's writing two books – one on the railway and one on his life – and working on a science-fiction short story. In June and July 2009 he returned to his boyhood stamping ground to work on his memoirs at the Michael King Writer's Centre in Devonport.

Painting, sketching and writing poetry are also part of his repertoire. He pulls out a drawer in a small desk in his workman's shed to reveal pages of lyrical writing. Under a bench is a potter's wheel and in a corner sits a partly finished sculpture made from coiled andesite clay worked into voluptuous curves.

Art historians and theorists could have a field day with Barry's work, which appears to be plump with breasts and studded with phallic symbols. He has his own ideas, explaining that he chose to spurn relationships in favour of action. "I had twice as much energy as most people seemed to have. I'm not interested in people and sex and stuff. My energy had to go somewhere didn't it?"

He does acknowledge that perhaps his sensuous self is revealed in the clay instead of through human contact. "I have been accused of having Asperger's syndrome but, if I've got it, everyone else has got it too," he says with a laugh. "If you can't see the funny side of yourself, you'll never make art."

His final legacy is in the throes of being built. Just beyond his shed is a concrete pad that will one day support a new home and an art gallery to hold his life's work and his extensive collection of New Zealand artists, including works by Toss Woollaston, Ralph Hotere, Michael Illingworth, May Smith and Nigel Brown.

"To do everything I want to do," he says, "I'll have to live to 110."

See more at nzhouseandgarden.co.nz ■

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A feast for the senses in Sydney

There's always something new happening on Sydney's dining scene, from food trends to restaurant openings

TRENDS TO TRY

Still hot is the tasting menu, a series of small-sized servings designed for sharing. Degustation meals, where chefs present a string of delicately sized and flavoured dishes perfectly matched to wines, are also popular.

HOT NEW RESTAURANTS IN SYDNEY

Ivy in George Street, in the heart of Sydney, is the city's ultimate platinum party destination, where you can move seamlessly from a glass of champagne on The Lawn to dinner poolside at the rooftop Italian restaurant Uccello.
No visit to this sprawling venue is complete without reclining on elegant loungers in The Den, sipping cocktails and grazing on modern Japanese canapés from Teppanyaki. *320/330 George St, Sydney, www.merivale.com/ivy*

Bodega in Commonwealth Street, Surry Hills, serves from a wide Spanish/South American tapas tradition. Enjoy casual grazing over shared plates with simple, rustic food or take the time to wander through the extensive Spanish, Argentine and Chilean wine list, sampling tasty tapas delights along the way. It's part of the new wave of tapas bars in Sydney, with a funky fit-out (a Spanish matador mural), delicious, simple food and a great wine list. *216 Commonwealth St, Surry Hills, www.bodegatapas.com*

Universal in Darlinghurst has turned small-plate dining into an art form. The savoury dishes draw inspiration from across the world and the desserts are astounding. *Republic 2 Courtyard, Palmer St between Burton & Liverpool, Darlinghurst, www.universalrestaurant.com*

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At **A Tavola** in Victoria Street, Darlinghurst, chef-owner Eugenio Maiale serves beautiful house-made pasta from a small but spectacular menu focusing on classic Italian dishes.
A Tavola ("to the table") oozes warmth and style: ribbons of pasta hang in the kitchen, the lighting is soft and sultry and the atmosphere intimate. *348 Victoria St, Darlinghurst*, www.*atavola.com.au*

Hugos Manly, located at the Manly ferry wharf, offers stunning water views and a fresh and easy menu. The sophisticated yet relaxed atmosphere will appeal to anyone looking for a relaxing Sunday afternoon. *Shop 1, Manly Wharf, East Esplanade, Manly, www.hugos.com.au*

Icebergs Dining Room and Bar graces the cliffs of South Bondi Beach, offering elegant dining accompanied by one of the best views in Sydney. Watch swimmers and surfers glide in the waves while sipping on an apple martini. *One Notts Ave, Bondi Beach, www.idrb.com*

SYDNEY'S WINE BAR REVOLUTION

Sydney's new wave of wine bars is opening up a whole new drinking culture in the city. Visit any of these cosmopolitan and stylish wine bars to experience wine flights (multiple tastings), wine education and food matching. Here are some of the hottest bars in town:

Bambini Wine Room is European in sensibility, but offers good Australian wine alongside French and Italian options in the city centre. *185 Elizabeth St, Sydney city centre, www.bambinitrust.com.au*

Gazebo Wine Garden features a wine list with more than 300 great wines (50 by the glass) and a quirky decor that includes live moss growing on the walls, a stuffed fox and a red studded lounge. Great outdoor courtyard area. *2 Elizabeth Bay Rd, Elizabeth Bay, www.gazebowinegarden.com.au*

Firefly, on the water in Walsh Bay, is a small but perfectly formed tapas bar with great views of Sydney Harbour in a still largely undiscovered part of Sydney. *Pier Seven, 17 Hickson Rd, Walsh Bay, www.fireflybar.com.au*

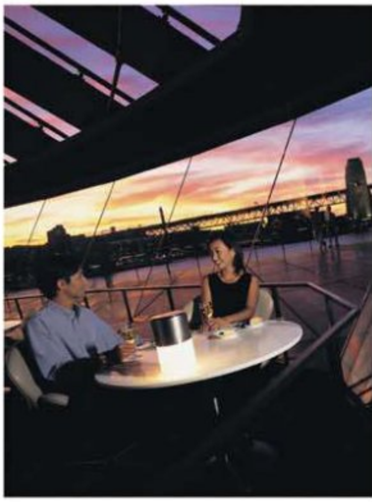
Glass Wine Bar in the Hilton Hotel in central Sydney has regular tastings accompanied by meals from the kitchen of celebrity chef Luke Mangan. *400 George St, Sydney*, www.*glassbrasserie.com.au*

Wine Odyssey in The Rocks is a wine bar, tasting theatre, aroma room and small restaurant serving matching food and wine flights. Featuring only premium Australian wines, Wine Odyssey aims to deepen wine appreciation, finesse palates and introduce guests to wines never encountered before. *Corner of Harrington and Argyle Sts, The Rocks*, www.*wineodysssey.com.au*

Mille Vini is a dark, moody, cosy bar that's one of the most stylish places to enjoy a glass of wine in Sydney. Specialising in Italian wine and antipasti, Mille Vini ("1000 wines") offers wines selected to accompany the food perfectly and to be enjoyed in true Italian style. Enjoy skewers of grilled meat, zucchini flowers, jamon, balls of marinated cheese and much more. *397 Crown St, Surry Hills*

Time to Vino is a low-key, buzzy neighbourhood wine bar with a European vibe and an ever-evolving wine list and blackboard food menu. Local Australian and international wines accompany a delightfully quirky dining menu: Waiting for Friends (little bites like the charcuterie board), Friends Are Here (larger, main-style dishes) and Who Needs Friends (dessert). *66 Stanley St, Darlinghurst, www.timetovino.com*

Visit www.sydney.com for more information.



THIS PAGE (from top left) Nightlife in Newtown, Sydney. Cafe Sopra, Waterloo (middle right). Guillaume at Bennelong.

OPPOSITE Opera Bar, Sydney Harbour. Clipper Cafe, Glebe. The Australian Hotel in The Rocks, Sydney.

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Small wonder

Downsizing to absolute sandside on Auckland's Takapuna beach has been a breeze for a pair of empty nesters

WORDS PENNY LEWIS
PHOTOGRAPHS KELLEY EADY LOVERIDGE

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THIS PAGE Clyde the cat enjoys the late morning sun on the deck of Lyn and Rex Crowther's Takapuna beachfront home; the movable cedar screens provide shade and privacy. **OPPOSITE** Aalto Colour created just the right pale stain for this poplar ply-clad wall in the living area; the pots are from Verde.

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THIS PAGE The living area floors are solid French oak; on the wall above the loose-covered Flexform sofa is a work by Will Handley. **OPPOSITE** (clockwise from top left) Lyn at work in the kitchen; open shelves hold ceramics below the sand-coloured composite stone island benchtop. A bright red chair brought from the couple's previous home provides a punch of colour. The wall sculpture (left) is by Auckland-based artist Ray Haydon; ECC in Auckland supplied the American oak table and bench seat.

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THIS PAGE A custom-designed cabinet below the picture window in the living area conceals a pop-up television. **OPPOSITE** (from top) A ringside view of Takapuna beach and Rangitoto Island from the deck. Although the home has been rebuilt from the foundations up, it has been designed to blend with the units immediately behind it; the cedar-clad exterior will weather to a subtle shade of silver.

Good things are said to come in small packages and that's certainly true of the Takapuna beachfront home Lyn Crowther shares with her husband Rex. The old adage fits just as well when applied to Lyn herself. With plenty of accompanying mirth, she shares an observation made by her three-year-old granddaughter Brodie about her nana being a "little-sized grown-up".

Family photos, particularly of Brodie and her baby sister, Cameron, eight months, adorn the fridge in the Crowthers' cleverly designed home, which stylishly combines the convenience of apartment living with the "wow factor" of a ringside seat on one of Auckland's most beautiful beaches. The snapshots are a marker of the new phase in Lyn and Rex's lives – the empty nest years. Their children, Torrin and Kyra, are both married and established elsewhere. Torrin and his wife Pippa are the parents of those adored grandchildren.

The story of this home begins three years ago, when Lyn was keen to downsize from the four-bedroom clifftop home she and Rex had built near Takapuna Grammar School. That house, designed by architect Geoff Richards (and featured on the cover of the January 2006 issue of *NZ House & Garden*), had started to feel a little big for a couple at home on their own.

Lyn heard about a three-bedroom unit on the market, just a few footsteps from sought-after Takapuna Beach. "It was meant to be," she says. They bought it, painted the inside walls white and moved in, living in it for a year before embarking on a major renovation that saw the 114sqm home totally rebuilt.

The Crowthers assembled the same local Devonport team who'd designed and built their clifftop house – architect Geoff and builder Derek Armstrong. The project took a year but luckily the Crowthers were able to stay close by, renting the adjoining unit.

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They moved back into their own new and improved digs in December 2008. Because they had lived onsite for 12 months before the rebuild began, Lyn and Rex had a good idea of what they wanted for their new home. They sacrificed a third bedroom for a bigger living area, a decision they have been very pleased with.

"It looks like a small house, but we can fit heaps in here," says Lyn. "We had Rex's 60th birthday party recently, with a couple of guys playing trumpets and the music going – all the stuff you do at our age!"

The move from family home to compact abode was accomplished with good planning, a pragmatic approach and a willingness to try something different, they say. For instance, council requirements meant a window couldn't be included in the main bedroom, so Geoff added a skylight for illumination and dropped the height of the wall it shares with the open-plan living area to increase air circulation. >

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"It looks like a small house, but we can fit heaps in here. We had Rex's 60th birthday party recently, with the music going – all the stuff you do at our age!"

THIS PAGE (left to right) The couple's super-king-sized bed was one of the few pieces of furniture they brought with them from the family home. A Poliform Senza Fine wardrobe system from Studio Italia provides plenty of storage. In the guest bathroom, the clean-lined hand basin from Matisse is deliberately contrasted with a decorative mirror from Verde. **OPPOSITE** Lyn soaks up the sun on the deck steps with friends Maria and Marijke.

The Crowthers brought very little in the way of furniture from their previous home. Most of it went to their out-of-town beach house and the kids' homes, but they did bring a couple of tables, their much-loved super-king-sized bed and an armchair. Lyn went shopping for new smaller-scale furniture, buying pieces that caught her eye and fitted the dimensions of the new floor plan.

The floor itself – solid French oak tongue-and-groove – was the starting point for the interior colour palette and furniture choices. One particularly clever buy was a square American oak dining table and bench seats, bought for a greatly reduced sale price at ECC. "The square shape works well and seems to take up less space than a rectangular table."

Two Ground Piece sofas from Studio Italia, designed by Antonio Citterio for Flexform, can provide seating for several people or allow Lyn and Rex to stretch out luxuriously. The couches' long, low dimensions also make the living area feel very roomy and allow the view outside to remain the hero.

A television is concealed within a low built-in cabinet under a window. "Rex got this idea from boating," says Lyn, working the controls to make the television pop up through a flap in the top of the cabinetry.

"It saves a lot of space and means we don't have a TV dominating the room."

Other space-saving ideas include a discreet cupboard housing a washer and dryer that's set into the wall of the en suite bathroom – a space "borrowed" from the carport outside.

"This arrangement wouldn't work so well if you had children living at home as you'd need a laundry tub, but it works well for us," says Lyn.

One not-so-small feature in the house is a long, chunky composite stone kitchen island benchtop: 3.5m long, 1.3m wide and 120mm-deep, it's in a hue evocative of the sand on the beach outside.

"We're very much casual, sit-around-the-kitchen-bench people," says Lyn. Although the bench isn't small, the open-shelf storage on the side facing the dining area prevents the space from looking closed-in.

The Poggenpohl kitchen was made to Lyn's requirements, so she was able to specify a bench height that is a little lower than standard – perfect for her and visiting granddaughters. ■

Visit this Auckland home on Friday March 12, 2010 as part of the ***NZ House & Garden Tours***. See page 81 of this issue for information or visit ticketmaster.co.nz for ticket sales.

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Our favourite part of the house is: The sliding screens, which can be used like external curtains, giving us privacy if we want it. They protect us from an easterly storm but we can still see out. And if we're going away, we just pull them across and off we go. (*Rex and Lyn*)

At the moment we're enjoying eating: Fresh snapper and crayfish caught by our son Torrin and son-in-law Darren, both keen divers and fishermen. (*Rex and Lyn*)

And drinking: Moncellier wines. The young winemaker there is a friend of my daughter and one to watch. (*Rex*)

My best moments in the kitchen are: With my granddaughters, who stand on a stepladder next to me cooking up a storm… and making a big mess! (*Lyn*)

My best moments in the garden are: When the tide is right and you can hear the happy chatter of families enjoying the beach. (*Lyn*)

I love this part of New Zealand because: With Rangitoto and the islands of the Hauraki Gulf right on our doorstep, it truly is magic. (*Lyn*)

The first thing I do when I get home is: Put my golf clubs away! (*Lyn*)

In the next five/10 years I'd like to: Fill the house with even more grandchildren. (*Lyn*)

Rex and Lyn Crowther

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Bits and pieces

Shards and snippets of the past and present bring life to a little wooden villa in the Wairarapa

WORDS JANE HURLEY / **PHOTOGRAPHS** BRENT DARBY/NARRATIVES

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THIS PAGE In Alison Norris-Baber's Carterton cottage, antique French linens hang decoratively on a drying rack close to the dining room woodburner.
OPPOSITE Vases and small works are displayed on the living room mantelpiece.

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THIS PAGE (clockwise from above) Alison made the cushions on the Freedom sofas from vintage blankets. The 1930s Smiths clock in the kitchen came from a friend's antiques shop in England. Alison Norris-Baber. An old bathroom cabinet on the dining room wall houses an antique hand-painted tea set. Alison's husband Gregor made the dining room table. **OPPOSITE** Trumpet the cat waits for a treat. The dining room feature wall behind the woodburner is painted in Resene 'Sorrento'.

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"I'm all about memories. I love anything with a story; anything that holds some sort of social history"

OPEN UP A battered old pine cupboard in textile artist Alison Norris-Baber's house and shards and snippets of the past are likely to come tumbling out, waiting to be turned by her dexterous hands into something simple, fresh and new. It's what her design label, Agnes Coy, with its handmade homewares, clothes and accessories, is all about. And it's reflected in every corner of the blue and white villa she shares with her husband Gregor in the middle of Wairarapa wine country.

Glass-fronted cabinets in Alison's workroom hold prim stacks of antique fabric that will become cushions or soft sculptures or flounced corsages. The dining table was made by Gregor from old scaffolding planks and salvaged Victorian table legs. And a blush pink 1920s silk negligee, worn by Alison on her wedding night, adorns the guest bedroom like a piece of art.

"I'm all about the memories," she says. "I love anything with a story; anything that holds some sort of social history."

English lass Alison first met Kiwi lad Gregor in Brighton 14 years ago at a music festival. She was singing in a punk rock band and working as an actress and he was a young builder, just arrived in the United Kingdom on his big OE.

Seven years later ("to the hour") they were married and, in 2006, left Brighton to move back to New Zealand. Life in the bustling seaside town had become a bit of a rat race and they wanted to spend more time together – "to get to the stage where we were totally satisfied to curl up together on the settee with a good book". >

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(Above and below) Vintage linens and fresh flowers enhance the romantic appeal of the guest bedroom; the side table and blanket box were bought for a few pounds at car boot sales in England.

(Above and below) The day bed in the spare room was a TradeMe find; Alison plans to create a library in here "when Gregor has time to build shelves". The pedestal basin in the bathroom came with the house.

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THIS PAGE Alison and Gregor chose Resene paints 'Periglacial Blue' and 'Bianca' for the villa and studio exteriors. The pumice and driftwood wreath came from a Martinborough fair. A reclaimed brick and gravel path leads to Alison's workroom, once the old garage and carport.

Things weren't easy for Alison at first, with family and friends half a world away. Comfort came from an unexpected source when she began reading the collected letters of New Zealand pioneer women to their families in England.

"I found real strength from those women. I knew they were going through similar things to me, but for them it was even worse. Their letters took six, seven, eight months to get home, whereas I could send an email and it would be there in an instant." Plus they had an enduring pastime in common. Like Alison, they would have snatched precious hours to spend in the "gentle arts" – the sewing and embroidery that Alison also loves. "I just felt a real connection."

So perhaps it's not surprising that Alison chooses her laptop when asked what item she'd save if, God forbid, the house ever caught fire. "I'd grab the laptop because that's how I keep in touch with family and friends – it's like saving the old love letters that people used to send."

When Gregor and Alison found their 1910 cottage on a quiet country road in Carterton, it had already been modernised but the decor was quite, well, invigorating. The kitchen was orange and green with dark blue cabinets; the master bedroom was "blood red". >

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The best time of the week for me is: Sunday evening. Gregor and I will cook a meal together, perhaps share a bottle of good Wairarapa wine and then curl up on the sofa with a couple of good books.

At the moment I am eating: Fresh vegetables and salads from our garden. We garden organically and both enjoy cooking. There's nothing quite like nipping into the garden, gathering your ingredients and sharing them with friends and family.

If I could do one thing to the house it would be: Change its position so that the house had more of a connection to the garden.

I love this part of New Zealand because: It's filled to the brim with artists, writers, musicians, crafters and sculptors. Carterton has oodles of potential. Great things are starting to happen here – you can just sense it.

The first thing I do when I get home from work is: Check to see what's going on in the vege garden and then make a fuss of our cat Trumpet.

My favourite part of the house is: The studio. There's a real calmness and tranquillity about the space and it's filled with items from the past that I respect and am eager to use again.

The happiest day in this house was: The day my parents arrived from the UK for their first visit.

Alison Norris-Baber

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"It was like sleeping in the womb – really disturbing!" says Alison. "The first thing we did was whack some cream paint on the walls."

Gregor's carpentry skills have been put to good use. He made the kitchen worktop from salvaged pine, which "only gets better with age," says Alison. And in the living room he whipped up a coffee table from scaffolding planks and a set of old legs given to him by a friend.

"The top's got a bit of a wave in it, which I really like," says Alison. "We balance glasses of wine there quite precariously."

Alison's passion for antique fabrics really comes to the fore in the work and display space that Gregor converted out of their garage and carport. "People always wanted to see where I worked and what I worked with, so we wanted this to be open plan. Customers can come and walk around my studio and look in all the boxes. I don't mind that, in fact I encourage it."

It has, however, been a challenge coming to terms with an open-plan living space after years of living in small rooms in tiny flats in the UK. "We thought the best thing to do was to keep it really simple and work with just two or three colours," says Alison, a fan of cool Scandinavian interiors and blue and white combinations.

There was another influence at work. "Since I was 10, I've always lived by the sea and I really miss it. So I wanted something with a beachy feel. I love that battered, driftwoody style."

She also loves the chipped and damaged beauty of old furniture, whether it has been unearthed in second-hand shops or rescued from skips, friends and car boot sales. "I'm not afraid to let a piece of furniture show its age. It shows that it has a history, that it's had other lives and has been loved by other people. We like to hunt down pieces of furniture. I can think of nothing worse than going into a furniture store and just buying everything for my house from there. It would be meaningless, it wouldn't have a soul."

Alison's philosophy is that anything can add warmth and beauty. "A stone can look decorative if it's in the right setting. An old piece of wood can look decorative if it's displayed properly."

And, though this little white wooden cottage might look immaculate, everything here is to be used, touched and enjoyed. "I want my guests to feel comfortable. I want them to be able to take off their shoes and put their feet up on the settee. And they do."

See more of Alison's work at agnescoy.co.nz

THIS PAGE (from above) In the studio, a saw horse, an old sewing machine table, painted and given a new top by Gregor and a salvaged trunk display pieces of fabric art handmade by Alison. An embroidered cushion and felt brooches. Embroidery cottons. **OPPOSITE** (top) Alison's work table, painted Resene 'Friar Grey', came from a Masterton second-hand shop; she often plays old movies on the laptop in the background for inspiration. Fabric hearts (bottom left), soft trees and a sheep's wool and raffia nest.

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Last stop Ophir

A mudbrick cottage in a tiny Central Otago goldmining town has made a permanent impression on the hearts of its latest owners

WORDS GENEVIEVE ROBINSON
PHOTOGRAPHS DANIEL ALLEN

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THESE PAGES (from left) Sun shines through the French doors into the dining space at Lou and Sandra Robinson's Ophir cottage. In the kitchen, home-made pickles and preserves jostle for space among the green glassware and plates.

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"The people who live here or come here – we are all kindred spirits"

IT WAS ON A leisurely Sunday afternoon drive in the country that Lou and Sandra Robinson first saw MacKnight Cottage. They were looking for a holiday retreat from their Dunedin home and Hawea and Albert Town were on their route. Last stop was Ophir, a quaint Central Otago goldmining town; they'd spotted a newspaper ad for a mudbrick cottage that might be worth a look.

First impressions weren't good. "It was desolate and I didn't like it," says Lou. "We thought no more about it."

And that was that until quite a few months later, when they saw the cottage featured in an article by Ophir resident and journalist Lois Galer in the New Zealand Historic Places Trust magazine.

"The house looked much better," says Sandra. "The gutter-high grass had been cut right back and the false plaster frontage that gave the appearance of stonework had been removed to expose the original mudbricks. The house looked the way it should."

Sandra called the new owners to ask if they would consider selling. The answer was a firm no. >

THIS PAGE (from top) Sandra and Lou host dinner parties at this table – a good old-fashioned roast and a few bottles of Central Otago wine are often on the menu. The woodburner, surrounded by old brass plates and bed-warmers, makes winter visits toasty.
OPPOSITE (from top left) The sunroom, a recent addition, blends with the cottage's historic design. The "midget" kitchen is all the couple needs on holiday. Sandra's eye for florals and colour is evident in the winter room.

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The Robinsons' sights remained set on Ophir, however. They'd fallen in love with its open ochre landscapes and big blue sky. They loved its history, the original buildings dating from the days when the township was called Blacks, the still-functioning post office and, of course, the people.

And then, 12 years ago, just four weeks before Christmas, the owners changed their minds and rang the Robinsons to see if they still wanted to buy the historic cottage. A deposit was paid the same day and the deal was done.

Lou Robinson, the director of Hadley & Robinson, a structural engineering practice in Dunedin, says one of the main reasons he loves the cottage is the simplicity of its structure. Steel rods run the length of the building and are bolted at each end, keeping it braced – a method that has stood the test of more than 100 years and, no doubt, many more to come.

Lou has also forged a bond with the land, centred on his summer vege garden. It's an enterprise he has neither the time nor the space for back home in Dunedin. Last October he planted another batch of seed potatoes in his vege patch, like most of his fellow townsfolk.

"It's an annual event," says Lou. "The seed potatoes are bought late in the year and then dug up during the week before Easter." Each individual harvest is bagged up and taken to the Peace Memorial Hall in Ophir, where awards are handed out to the smallest, the largest, the ugliest and the biggest crop. The potatoes are then auctioned off to raise funds for the Ophir Welfare Committee.

It's all part of the annual pot luck dinner on Easter Sunday – a "hugely anticipated event", according to Sandra. "Locals and 'cribbies' flock to the hall with a plate of food and nibbles and a bottle of wine. We all have a bit of a laugh. The people who live here or come here, we are all kindred spirits."

She and her sister Judy Smith co-own Elizabeth Russell House, a gift and linen store housed in a quaint two-storeyed cottage overlooking Dunedin. Sandra's eye for fabrics and colours can also be seen at work in her favourite room at the cottage – the sunroom.

It's a recent addition to the circa 1904 property – not that you can tell. The floral rolled-arm sofa and the 1940s magazines suggest a home that has been in the family for generations. There's a sideboard full of vintage china and old lamps and books adorn every surface. Plump cushions covered in fabric remnants and pre-loved linen and lace decorate the comfy couches and old wicker chair.

"I love sitting on the floral sofa when the late sun is flooding into this room and flicking through some of the old magazines," enthuses Sandra. "Their advertisements and drawings are fabulous." >

ABOVE Asian-influenced objects – a plate, vase, artwork and kimono – add a different flavour in the middle bedroom.
OPPOSITE (clockwise from top) The sunroom is a perfect place to rest or party; the old wooden cabinet stows the couple's drinks selection. Lou and Sandra. The floral wallpaper in the entrance hall is in keeping with the cosy, cottagey look prevalent throughout the house.

This weekend I will be: Possibly playing a round of golf in the morning at a nine-hole course near us, then we'll have a casual pot-luck dinner with friends. All going well, I may even begin preserving some jams and chutneys – a habit I've just reacquired after 25 years!

At the moment we're enjoying eating: Pâté from Alexandra butchery The Fridge – it's amazing.

And drinking: Carrick sauvignon blanc, which is on the menu at Blacks Hotel, our fantastic local pub.

A quote I often use: "I wouldn't be dead for quids." That's something my husband Lou often says, especially standing in the sun with a glass of wine in his hand.

In the next five or 10 years, I'd like to: Do up another house – I just loved the whole process. Also, we want to travel again. We've never been to France, so that's on the list.

The most important thing to me is: Spending time with one another and occasionally having a good laugh.

My favourite part of the house is: We have a lovely sunroom, but what I really like is sitting outside the back doors under my green umbrella with polka dots – it's private and sheltered and really relaxing.

Sandra Robinson

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THIS PAGE Apart from the red front door, the front of the cottage was left relatively unadorned to reflect its simple origins.

As the years go by, Lou and Sandra find it harder and harder to leave their holiday home. The beds are bigger and more comfortable than they were 12 years ago and they have added a few more mod cons and extra living space.

Though the cottage is smaller than their Dunedin home, they seem to entertain more often here than they do back in the city. "I love to sit around the table with my friends," says Sandra.

The idea of spending more time at Ophir has been canvassed, but the couple know there's work to be done. "If we were to retire here in the coming years, some money would have to be spent," says Lou. "I would need a room for my piano." He also has plans to redevelop the old barn, a building that has seen a few changes in its history. Once a blacksmith's and a wheelwright's shop, it was later an undertaker's premises. "It needs restoring sooner rather than later," says Lou, who can picture it converted into an office for himself, perhaps, or a room for that piano.

There are other considerations too. The power supply in the area is unreliable and the telecommunications slow. "I would also miss the theatre," he says.

Meanwhile, the drive is only two hours door-to-door and there's always a warm welcome. The wood burner heats up the mudbrick house like a kiln, says Sandra. "It's so cosy here at nights. And, if we get here after dark in the winter, our neighbours often have the fire lit. We always toot from the car and they know we have arrived." ■

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THESE PAGES Most of the planting on Ray and Linda's Matakana property was done 30 years ago, just before the house was built, and the queen palms were already 1.5m high when they arrived in 1994; according to Ray the mineral peat soil is so good "you could grow plastic in it".

Encore

Kiwi pop icon Ray Columbus is leaving his Matakana home for the next act of a life lived in the public eye

WORDS LYN BARNES / **PHOTOGRAPHS** LIZ GOODALL

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"It's too big now, too much work... I'm not a green thumb, I'm a rock and roll singer"

THIS PAGE Linda and Ray have created several courtyard areas for entertaining or in which to enjoy a drink at the end of the day; after the rugged six years they've been through, they like to celebrate every day of life.
OPPOSITE (clockwise from top) Volare was designed by Auckland-based architect Peter Sargisson; white columns and a Venus de Milo statue were hired to set off the lush gardens around the house for their daughter Tina's wedding in 1998. All the buxus for the compass garden at the back of the house was propagated by Linda. Ray and Linda improvised with an old clothes line to support and display the white wisteria.

Life will be a doddle for Ray Columbus and his wife Linda when they sell their 8ha property near Matakana. They'll be sad to go, but their focus is now on making the most of their time together. Ray is still recuperating from a major stroke last June and the property takes a lot of looking after.

"It's too big now, too much work… I'm not a green thumb, I'm a rock and roll singer," says 66-year-old Ray, best known for his years with 60s group Ray Columbus and the Invaders, and their biggest hit, a little toe-tapper called *She's a Mod* – number one in 1964 in New Zealand and Australia.

Ray and Linda hope to buy an apartment in Auckland and a place near New York City, where their daughter and one-year-old grandson live.

"It's summers forever now," says Ray, though he plans to continue his work here and commute to the US.

It's likely Linda won't know what to do with herself when she leaves their home of 15 years. She does all the gardens and mows most of the lawns, which can take four to five hours at a time. The elegant 50-something has her own tool shed and proudly shows off a tidy selection of power tools, including a chainsaw. She thinks nothing of taking out a tree and chopping it up for firewood.

Ray claims that, when they left Auckland for Matakana, which was then "the sticks", he had to go and assure the chap at the local hardware store that Linda was not stalking him – she just loved tools. "I'm much happier shopping for tools than clothes," she says. >

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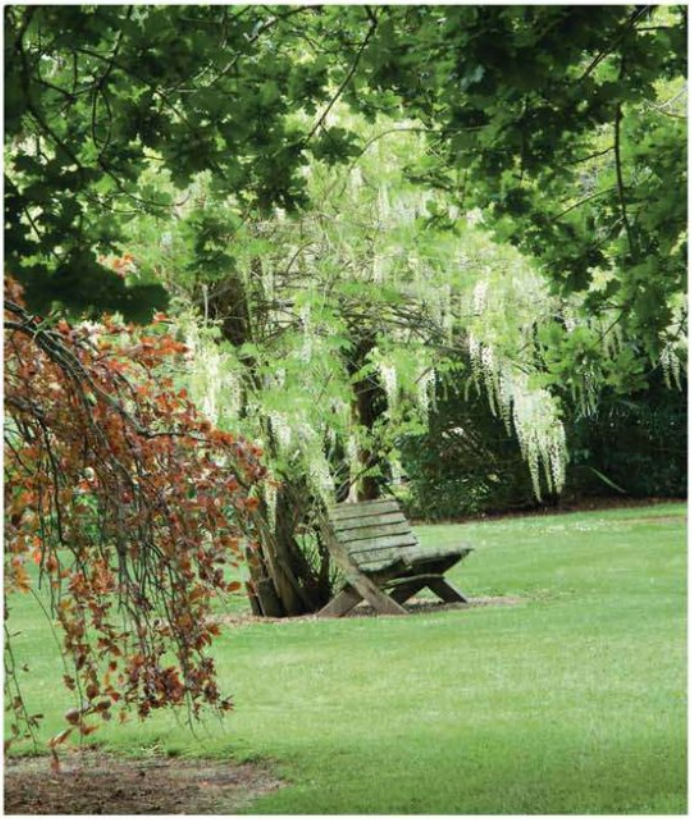

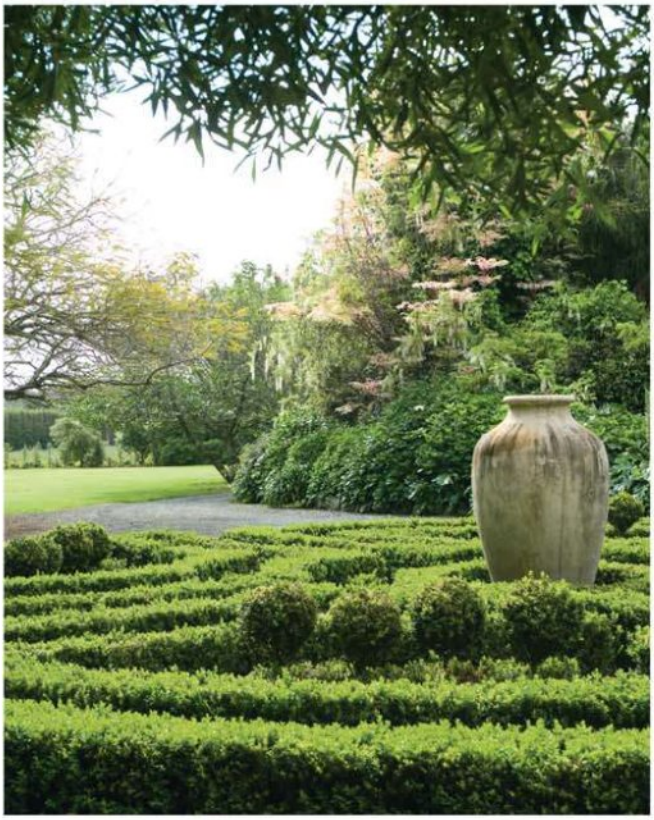

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THIS PAGE (clockwise from top) The concrete floors were sanded and painted by Linda. A dark-stained, rustic wooden door opening off the compass garden at the back of the house is the main entrance. Ray is the chief cook – he takes Linda breakfast in bed every morning; the Italian plates on the shelf are from Corso de' Fiori. The open-plan dining area looks through to the music and TV room.

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THIS PAGE (from right) Ray and Linda brought the antique travelling chest in the foreground back from New York; otherwise all their artwork and knick-knacks have been found locally. Ray (pictured here in the music room) has had to learn to sing and play again since his stroke; the trophy on the piano is his latest, the NZ Herald Legacy Award.

Their architecturally designed home, Volare, was originally owned by a family whose son studied landscaping, so the grounds were well planted. Linda has added the easy-maintenance gardens and courtyards and a shade house to propagate her favourite plants.

She has also taken the interior design in hand, giving the downstairs floor of their contemporary home the "shabby-chic" treatment. Out came her tools – a concrete grinder, hose and orbital sander – and the concrete floors (previously covered with sisal) were transformed and painted for a suitably "rustic" result. It worked so well that the floors in the Casa, a self-contained cottage in the grounds, were done the same way.

Linda and Ray loved the house's cedar exterior, with its white joinery, but found the dark timber interior too dark and depressing. So the walls and ceilings are now white throughout.

Furnishings and other decorative elements draw on a black, white and cream palette, with the odd splash of bold colour for effect. And, in sympathy with the rural setting, Linda has chosen French provincial and Italian-style furniture, enhancing the look with original touches such as her use of old wooden shutters as a headboard in the master bedroom.

The home is perfect for country living, with large windows that slide back to open the house to the outdoors in summer. The couple have taken out the wall of their third downstairs bedroom and turned it into a TV and music room, where Ray's baby grand Yamaha piano takes pride of place. The spacious Casa, just metres from the main house, provides plenty of privacy for visitors.

Their complementary relationship began 20-odd years ago when the pair met in the Italian-style deli/cafe Ray used to own in Remuera. At the time he was divorced from his first wife, with whom he has a son and daughter (he has since adopted Linda's daughter, Tina, as his own). Linda says she recognised him instantly. "But I used to turn him off on the radio," she says with a chuckle.

Still, they both felt a connection. Though she was dining with a male companion, Ray found an opportunity to ask Linda what her Chinese horoscope was. On being told she was a tiger, he somewhat cheesily replied, "I've been looking for a tiger all my life." >

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THIS PAGE (clockwise from above) Linda and Ray have had four dogs at Volare but they're now dogless; here Linda tends her plants accompanied by Honey, a friend's dog. The wrought-iron chandelier hanging from the verandah roof was restored by Linda. Ray's "rogue's gallery" of awards in the stairwell, including Loxene Gold Discs on the wall and the key to the city of Christchurch, his hometown. **OPPOSITE** Volare, with its wisteria-clad verandah, seen from the reflecting pond.

They've been together since their first date, says Linda. But the past six years have been tough for the couple. In 2002 they were involved in a major car accident on a US highway in which Linda broke every bone in her face (today it's held together by seven titanium plates).

Then in 2004 Ray had a heart attack that left him with three stents in his arteries. Last year's major stroke followed a series of minor strokes, which Ray reckons were triggered by the earlier road accident.

"[My stroke] was similar to Rob Guest's, but he went straight into a coma… The blood thinners I was on for my heart saved me."

But this talk of difficult times is constantly punctuated with comments about how lucky they have been. Linda says she learned early on, as a child with polio, that there was no point in feeling sorry for herself. She believes in the therapeutic value of challenges – for herself and others.

"I knew Ray needed to learn new skills after the stroke, not just do the same things." So she had him following recipes and baking.

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"I'm no baker but Linda was amazing in my recovery – she doesn't take any prisoners either," jokes Ray.

Though his right vocal chords were paralysed with the stroke, Ray's back writing music and he's working on "the definitive collection" of Ray Columbus and the Invaders. There are other projects on the go too. After earning an OBE in 1974 and a Commemoration Medal in 1990 for services to tourism and trade, Ray feels he's done his bit to promote local music. Now he's representing others through the ins and outs of intellectual property. "I can open doors."

Ray grew up in a state house in Christchurch with six siblings and ended up sharing the stage with such international stars as Shirley Bassey, Tom Jones, the Hollies, Gladys Knight and the Pips, Eric Burdon and the Animals – to name but a few.

But he's always been interested in giving back. "He's been doing charity events since before any of the big stars got involved," says Linda.

At a recent fundraiser at Hamilton East Primary School, which had been badly affected by fire, Ray taught the students some entertainment skills and a few songs, including *She's a Mod*, which they sang to a sold-out concert in the school hall. "It was the most uplifting thing I've done in years."

It was the inspiration for the Ray Columbus Foundation, now being set up "to help children, wherever there is a need," says Ray. "Not every kid is going to be an All Black or a Silver Fern. I was a tap dancer and soccer player so I was a double sissy, but my father, who had me on the stage at six, encouraged us to do our very best with whatever we do."

See more at nzhouseandgarden.co.nz

My favourite part of the house is: The lounge and mezzanine above it – both relaxing places to sit, with garden views.
At the moment I am enjoying eating: Thai fish – cooked by me.
And drinking: Takatu Pinot Gris.
My best moments in the kitchen are: When Linda has baked an apple pie and takes it out of the oven.
A quote I often use is: "Nobody cares until everyone does." That's a quote from me and it's what I would have called my autobiography if I ever wrote one. But I decided that would be too boring.
I love this part of New Zealand because: The air in Matakana has a magnetic quality.
The most important thing to me is: Because of my health problems – every living day.
Our happiest day in this house was: When our daughter Tina was married in the garden – a fabulous day!
Ray Columbus

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Lasting legacy

A North Canterbury colonial landscaper's passion for magnificent trees is still being appreciated 100 years later

WORDS ADRIENNE REWI / **PHOTOGRAPHS** GUY FREDERICK

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THIS PAGE Brooke White takes border collie Jess walking in her parents' Okuku garden, Birch Hill; the property has been home to James and Glenice White since they moved down from Auckland five years ago. **OPPOSITE** The original homestead is romantically framed by a climbing rose.

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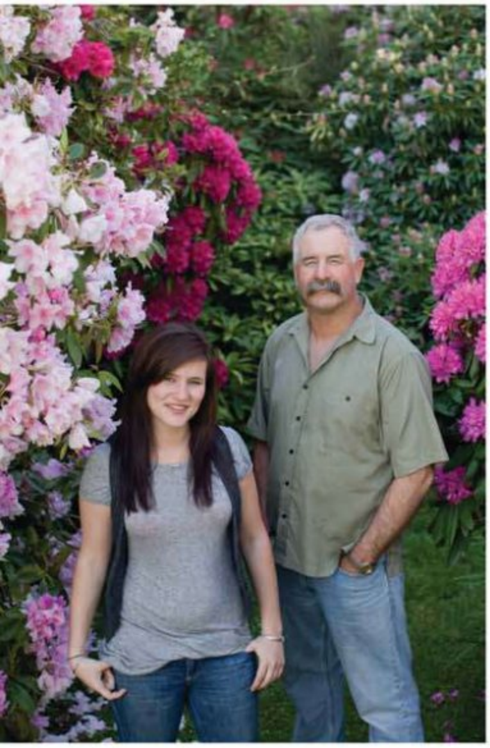
THIS PAGE The century-old house, which is part of a historic homes tour in the area, sits on a slight rise overlooking a vast expanse of lawn and giant trees. James White and his daughter Brooke. **OPPOSITE** Each spring, hundreds of rhododendrons burst into bloom, creating a flush of pink against the lush green backdrop of trees.



BIRCH HILL HOMESTEAD sits on a rise, overlooking a broad tablecloth of green lawn. It has an air of quiet grace about it and a sense of history imprinted on every timber board.

It was one of the reasons James and Glenice White fell in love with it and why, after five years on the property, they're convinced that purchasing it was one of the best decisions they've ever made.

"I'd always wanted an old homestead and I knew the best were in the South Island," says James. "We based ourselves in Christchurch when we moved down from Pukekohe [south of Auckland]. That gave us plenty of time to find the right property. Our daughters, Trinity, 25, and Brooke, 20, wanted to study at Otago University, so that fitted in well too. Trinity now lives in Sydney and they both love coming home to visit us here."

The decision paid off in 2004 when the couple found Birch Hill tucked away in a secluded North Canterbury setting at Okuku, 45 minutes from Christchurch. Designed by architect Samuel Hurst Seager and built in 1908, the house was still largely untouched, despite having served as a children's home from 1960 to 1985; it then stood empty till 1990.

Today the 465sqm, single-storey home sits on 18ha, surrounded by almost 1.6ha of park-like lawns and garden. It's a tranquil setting, memorable for the huge trees – at least 30 of them over 15 metres tall – that define the homestead garden. That was designed by Alfred Buxton (1872-1950), a prominent Christchurch colonial landscaper; for Glenice, his best legacy is his large plantings of rhododendrons (more than 40 varieties) and magnificent specimen trees.

"The rhododendrons start flowering in large drifts in late August and go through to November and they form a magnificent backdrop in spring," says Glenice. "I love the distinct seasonal changes we get here." >

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One of the property's loveliest features is its "secret garden" – a hidden courtyard completely enclosed by the house

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Autumn is Glenice's favourite time of the year. "We both love trees and the autumn display here is amazing."

The Whites have planted many new trees since arriving at Birch Hill and that includes hiring a digger to "re-shuffle" at least 60 existing mature trees from one part of the garden to another.

"We loved the fact that the homestead was original – even the maids' bells are still intact – and we felt the same about the garden. It's largely been a matter of refining a few things," says James. "Our main undertaking has been moving and planting trees, repairing the swimming pool and enclosing it in a new griselinia hedge and removing some of the rampant old-fashioned roses."

James has also introduced new features – gates made from old lichen-covered posts from the sheep yards, a sundial and a buxus garden on the driveway turnaround. He has added a good-sized potager, with raised beds made from old farm posts, and is in the process of creating woodland walkways lined with boulders from the nearby Garry River. And he has built a new studio on the site of the old blacksmith's workshop, which will be used for planned 10-day artist retreats at Birch Hill. The couple also run one- or two-day painting and sculpture workshops on request.

"It's a big garden and, though we have a lot of hedges and lawn to maintain, it is a very easy-care space," says James. >

THIS PAGE (from above left) James relaxes on the front verandah with Brooke, 20, on a break from her Dunedin studies. The bright red rhododendron 'Halfdan Lem' and the paler 'Hoppy' are just two of the 40 varieties planted by the property's original owners; between August and November the garden is a riot of pink, mauve, red, white and purple. **OPPOSITE** (clockwise from top) The enclosed inner courtyard is a sheltered, sunny spot where standard 'Iceberg' roses, wisteria, jasmine and buxus hedges flourish. The courtyard fountain was the focal point of landscaper Alfred Buxton's original formal design. The rhododendron 'Blue River'. A sunny window seat in the family room takes in the garden view.

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THIS PAGE (clockwise from top) Roses bloom beside the side door leading to what was once the pay office, where the farm workers received their wages through a small window. Turkeys, pheasants and a wild peacock roam happily through the garden, which is also home to around 20 pairs of wood pigeons. Gigantic Leyland cypress hedges, with doorways cut in, shelter the swimming pool area.

"It's not a fussy garden by any means," adds Glenice. "In its heyday, Birch Hill had numerous maids and three full-time gardeners. Now it's just James and me, so it needs to be easy to maintain."

One of the property's loveliest features is its "secret garden" – a hidden courtyard completely enclosed by the house, which can only be entered via the homestead's main living room. Its cloistered, romantic atmosphere is enhanced by the sound of water trickling from the property's original stone water fountain.

The fourth side of the courtyard is a wisteria-covered verandah – the perfect place from which to contemplate the tumble of scented creepers and the four standard 'Iceberg' roses that define the centre. A tight little forest of buxus hedges keeps everything visually aligned.

"In Pukekohe I had more than 250 roses surrounded by buxus hedges, but the buxus took forever to grow," says Glenice. "I've been amazed at how quickly it grows here. I planted cuttings and I had a full hedge in just two years. It's just as well I was born with a pair of secateurs in my hand."

Today James and Glenice are thankful that the original owners, the Millton family, had the foresight to plant so many magnificent trees. Two gigantic 30-metre-tall Douglas firs frame a view of nearby Mt Thomas; massive redwoods and Wellingtonias (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) define the front lawns and a spectacular copper beech, a huge weeping elm and a large "wild" woodland have attracted a lively bird population.

"We have more than 20 pairs of wood pigeons here and every summer they get drunk on all the wild cherries that grow in the paddocks," says James. "It's quite something to see them lurching through the sky. And we have a lot of bellbirds. Otherwise it's dead quiet here. That's one of the things we love most about it. It's serene. It's tranquil. It's perfect."

For information on art courses at Birch Hill Homestead, see birchhill.co.nz ■

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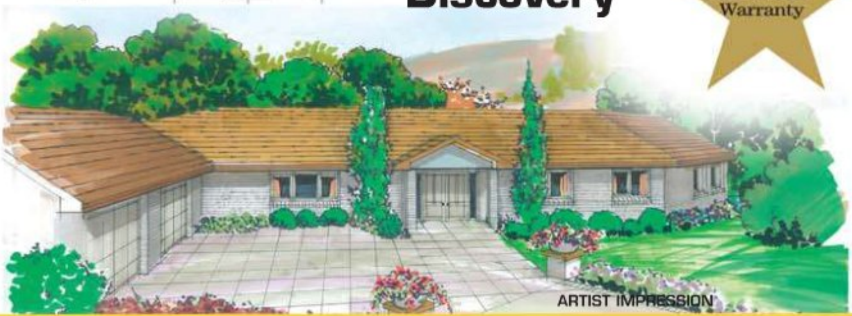

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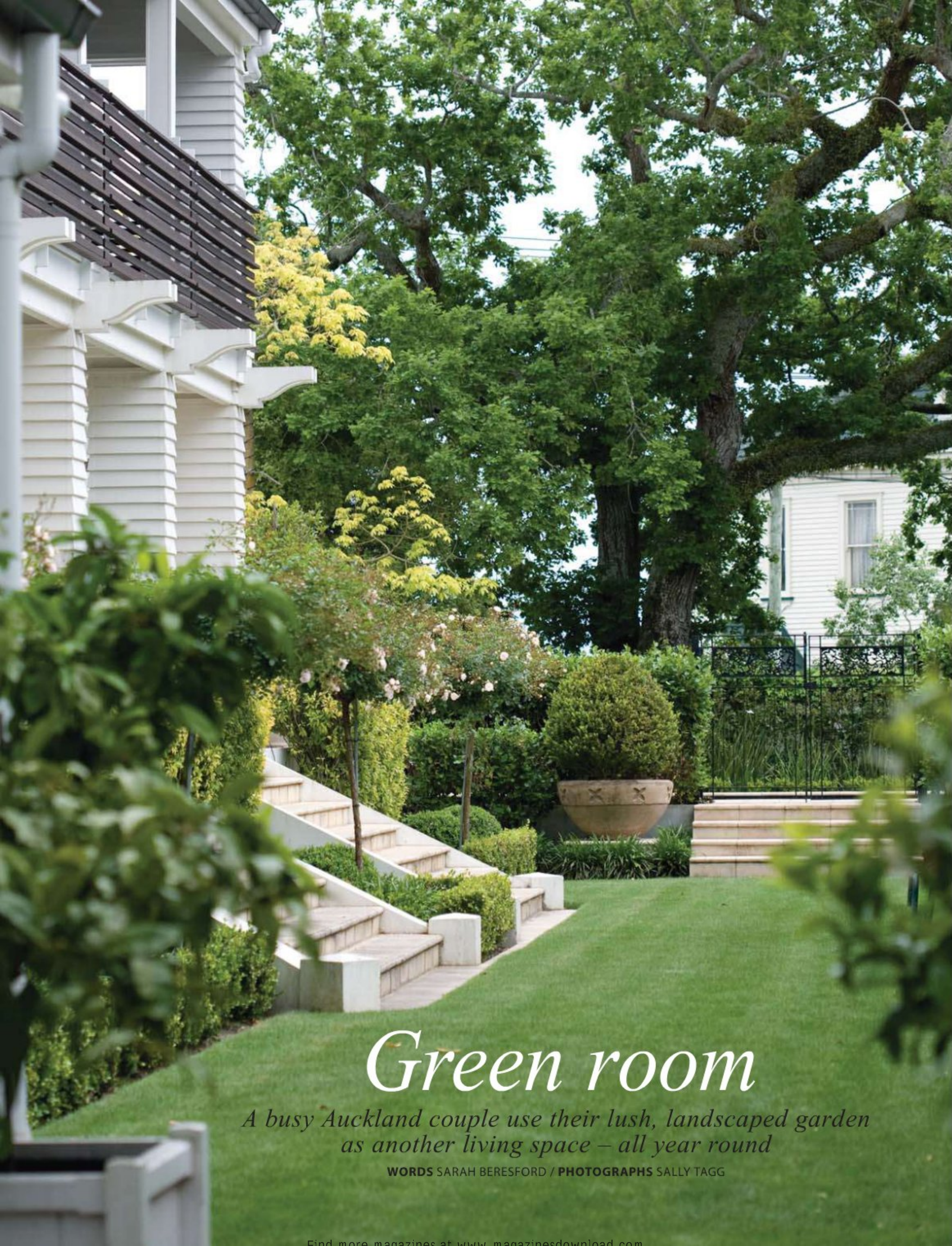

Green room

A busy Auckland couple use their lush, landscaped garden as another living space – all year round

WORDS SARAH BERESFORD / **PHOTOGRAPHS** SALLY TAGG

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THESE PAGES (from left) A towering oak tree lends Kate and Howard Ross' three-year-old garden a feeling of maturity while giant pots, stone steps and layered plantings add depth and texture. Extensive areas of paving around the fireplace are broken up by square pebble inserts. Some of the few flowers in the garden include the delicate, iris-like blooms of *Dietes iridioides* (below right) and *Dietes bicolor* (below left) . A tender curl of the native fern *Blechnum tricolor* (below centre).

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THIS PAGE (clockwise from top) Clipped *Buxus macrophylla* hedging is used throughout the garden to give the beds a smart outline. A row of citrus in square planters defines a seating area at the side of the house. The roses preserved from the previous owner's garden flower for months. Standard orange trees are a feature of the garden beds by the fireplace and gates. Landscaper Mark Reid couldn't find a perfectly round stone for the water feature, so he had a ball made.
OPPOSITE The low-maintenance garden is designed for relaxation and play. Kate Ross and her five-year-old daughter Mackenzie.

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"The standard roses were part of the original garden and I told the builders they'd better watch out for them, or else!"

KATE ROSS READILY admits that she's not really a flowery kind of person. "I like lots of greenery. I find it incredibly peaceful to look at." So it's a bit surprising that she placed a "protection order" on four blush-pink standard roses that line the verandah on one side of her home in Remuera, Auckland.

"After my husband Howard and I bought the property, we lived in the original house for about six months. Then we demolished it right down to the floorboards and built our new home.

"The standard roses were part of the original garden and I told the builders they had better watch out for them, or else!" she says, laughing. "But they survived during 18 months of building, surrounded by ladders, scaffolding and building materials."

The roses are part of a select few flowering plants in a garden that perfectly captures the strong structure and feeling of serenity that Kate wanted. She worked on the design with Mark Reid of Natural Habitats Landscapes and achieved a clever mix of drama and restraint. "Mark and I got on very well and he seemed to know instinctively what we wanted."

The sculptural landscaping at the entry to the house complements the home's modernist lines. A smart, grid-paving treatment seamlessly blends the driveway with the entrance, highlighting a huge spherical water feature. >

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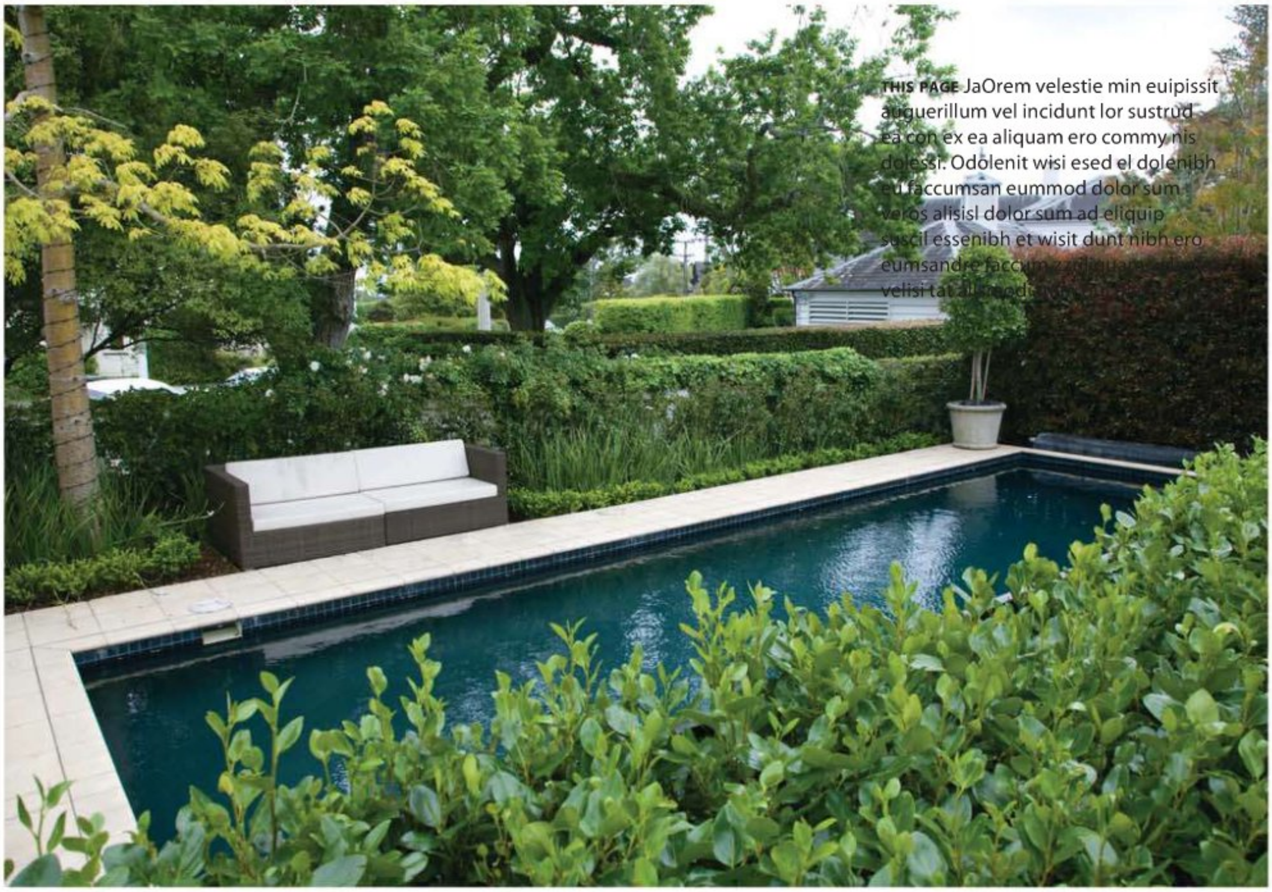

THIS PAGE (from above) The pool, designed and built by Natural Habitats, is framed on one side by bright green *Griselinia littoralis* hedging and will no doubt be the scene of much summer splashing as the children get older. Mark Reid used the shape of a traditional German cross as inspiration for the distinctive raised planter at the home's entrance.

It bubbles away atop a mound of river stones set in the centre of a raised geometric frame planted with *Coprosma* 'Hawera'. The shape of the sphere, designed by Mark and made from plastered fibreglass, is emphasised by the blocks of clipped *Waterhousia floribunda* lining two sides of the property's boundary. Behind the feature, the delicate foliage of a weeping cherry tree is the perfect foil for the strong lines of the paving and planting.

"When I first saw the plans for the new house I thought it had a Caribbean-style plantation influence," says Mark. "I wanted the front area to have a modernist, funky feel to it, in contrast to the garden at the back which has the more romantic, Mediterranean feel that Kate likes."

Pebble pathways on either side of the house lead to the rest of the garden which wraps around the house, forming a versatile outdoor living area.

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"We use it all year round," says Kate. "It gets a lot of sun and in winter the outdoor fireplace really throws out the heat. We were visiting a winery in the Hawke's Bay and saw that they had a metal grille in the fireplace which made a huge difference to the effectiveness of the fire. So we had one put in here – it means you can pile up the logs and the heat comes straight out. It's wonderful."

Outdoor sofas offer the perfect spot to cosy up in front of flickering flames and the area overlooks a glass-fenced swimming pool. Distinctive metal gates, designed by Mark, frame steps leading to the pool. "I've designed a lot of gates over the years," says Mark. "I knew that Kate likes grapes, so I worked in a grapevine motif."

Blocks of waterhousia, set off by the conical shapes of cypresses, screen the garden from neighbours and provide a peaceful green backdrop.

The couple lead very busy lives, so it was important that the garden was easy to maintain while still being user-friendly and inviting. Most surface areas are paved and the garden features extensive buxus, corokia and port wine magnolia hedging, and clipped buxus balls that give it year-round structure. Natural Habitats conduct ongoing garden maintenance.

Around the other side of the house, a broad stretch of smooth lawn easily accommodates a children's play set which gets plenty of use from Kate and Howard's children – Jack, seven, and Mackenzie, five – and their friends.

"Kids come around and say, 'Wow, you've got your own playground'. It's not really a playground but they have lots of fun on it."

The kitchen opens directly to a verandah, which is broad and long enough to house a table tennis table and generous dining table and chairs.

"We really do use all of the garden," says Kate. "It works perfectly as an outdoor living room." ■

Kate and Mackenzie admire the roses.

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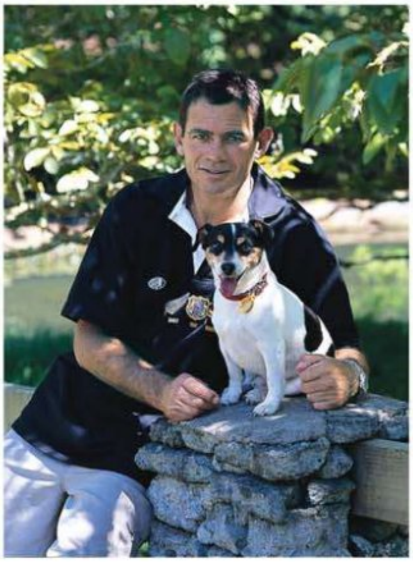
All in a day's work

The owners of this grand Taranaki garden have got maintenance down to a fine art **WORDS** VIRGINIA WINDER / **PHOTOGRAPHS** JANE DOVE JUNEAU



THIS PAGE (clockwise from top) Angus calves take cover beneath a flowering chestnut in Linley and Craig Oliver's Taranaki country garden. A froth of foxgloves and granny bonnets. Smudge, a Jack Russell fox terrier cross, sits atop a fence that Craig built one-handed. The walk up from the lake showcases Craig's broken-concrete handiwork. **OPPOSITE** Foxgloves and honesty beneath the tulip tree in the centre bed of the top garden.

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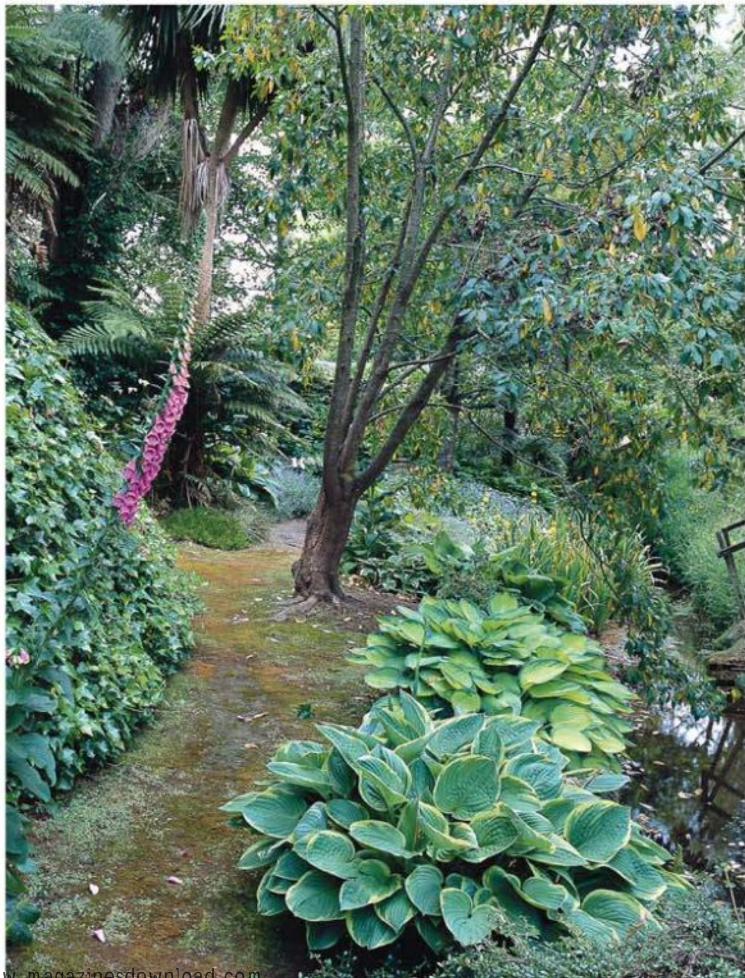

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FACED WITH THE daunting task of taking over a renowned country garden, Linley and Craig Oliver didn't get intimated; they got cracking. They learned to trim and train, prune and propagate, shape and spray, all the while knowing their efforts would come under the scrutiny of visiting garden lovers. Could they maintain the two-acre legacy left by regional gardening legends Bob and Val Sangster?

A dozen years on, the answer is a resounding yes – and the glowing comments from visitors to the Stratford property during the annual Taranaki Rhododendron and Garden Festival are testimony to this. "We are the keepers of the garden," says Linley. "It's ours now."

The only dilemma has been identifying the plants. Of course they can point out the old roses and rhododendrons, the maples and magnolias, but they haven't always been able to establish quite which variety they are – though not for lack of trying.

"I painstakingly went round the garden with Mrs Sangster, but in the first festival someone took all the name identifications," says Linley. Despite the label larceny, the Olivers sailed on, maintaining the beauty and making changes in the face of disaster.

There are essentially three parts to this creation: the English-style section that flows around the homestead; the tree-studded middle paddock where the Olivers' three children raised calves; and, below that, a wet woodland area that wanders beside an elongated pond awash with water lilies and bog plants.

Around the house, curved beds flank the lawn, overflowing with old granny bonnets with double-flowering heads, pink and white honesty, clematis, camellias, wisteria, azaleas and maples – the tall, the small and the weeping. "One of the big maples was planted in the 1920s by the grandfather of some local women known as the Styles sisters," says Linley. >

THIS PAGE Smudge sits in the shade of the rhododendron 'Lem's Cameo'; behind is one of Craig's clipped conifers which mirrors the shape of the tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*). **OPPOSITE** (clockwise from top left) A pink azalea and white rhododendron beside the lower lake track which is shaggy with hostas and ferns. A tranquil view across the farm stream which feeds the lake. Hostas, ivy and a lone foxglove flank the lake track. A free-standing, double-flowering wisteria and weeping maple are flowing forms in the top garden.

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The Olivers spend one day a week on this labour of love. They do it all themselves.

Buxus also cuts a fine figure and there's plenty about. Craig has trimmed some into low hedges and some into ornamental shapes. In the homestead garden there is a perfectly round ball sitting beside what could be an egg and on a bank by the pond are what can only be described as buxom buxus breasts.

During a twilight stroll through the garden, Craig pulls a stray weed here and there as he takes note of jobs to be done. Linley, also a tireless worker, is less frenetic, soaking in the light streaming through the trees and listening to the dusk chorus of birds.

On average the Olivers spend one day a week on this labour of love – less in winter and more in the warmer months. They do it all themselves with a little bit of help from 16-year-old son Chris, who's a bit of an action man like his father, especially on the trimming front. The couple's other children – Anita, 20, and Mark, 22 – have left home.

"They enjoyed it at times," says Linley. "They loved the farm, going out and playing on the hay bales. We would try to get them to help in the garden and they would run for the hills."

Though the property does go on show once a year during the festival and has been the backdrop for a few weddings and photo shoots, it's mostly a garden for entertaining family and friends, says Linley. "It's a lovely spot. It's just nice having friends over for barbecues."

Spring visitors are struck by the dazzling azaleas, the rhododendron 'Red Glow' behind the house and a mountainous snowdrift of flowers near the homestead garden gate.

"When that clematis is out, it's like a sea of white," she says. "One lady who came here said it was just like a bridal veil."

At the feet of these stunners is a lawn fit for bowling but there have been times when these expanses of green have taken an accidental beating. The Olivers once bought some spray to attack prickles in an area known as the sunken garden. It had already destroyed the rectangular lawn when they discovered the spray had a glyphosate base. "After that I was very particular about what sprays went on the lawn," says Craig.

Nature has also attacked the garden. A cherry tree blew down in a storm, blocking the driveway. "We were trapped," says Linley. "We couldn't go to work until we cleaned up."

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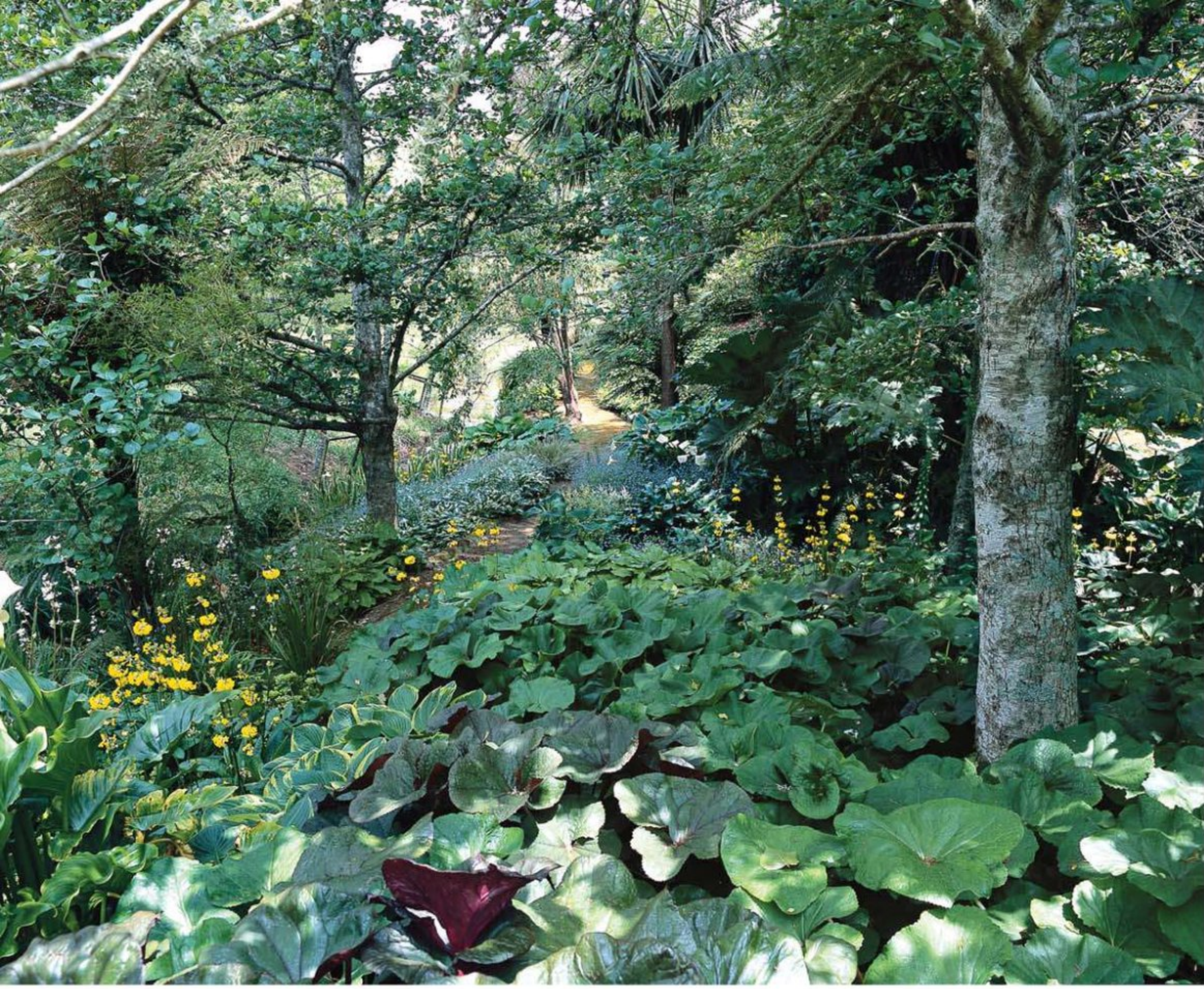

Another time, an old cowshed collapsed after heavy rain. This prompted the pair to redevelop the area at the back of house, using concrete from the demolition zone to build a retaining wall and to create columns for new fences.

Craig did a lot of the work one-handed. In 2001, right in the middle of the fencing work, he broke a hand playing rugby for the Eltham senior team. The first five-eighth was in plaster for six weeks, had one game back and broke the other hand. In the spirit of the great Sir Colin Meads, the hardcore Taranaki man built those fences regardless. "When I start something, I finish it," says Craig.

Losing a macrocarpa tree in a corner of the watery woodland garden the same year led the couple to lay a new garden path leading around a huge clump of purple irises, which cunningly hide the outlet drain, to a bridge curved like a rainbow. Underfoot, crunching metal is broken up with old railway sleepers from Craig's dad's farm next door.

Craig grew up down the road and imagined that he too would be a dairy farmer one day. But first he wanted to get a trade. He's now an instrument and control engineer with Transfield Worley in New Plymouth, but he's returned to the land in another way. "I never thought I would ever end up as a gardener."

For Linley, the garden is her sanctuary. After working in an office all day, she loves the tranquillity. "There's nothing like driving over that cattle stop at night and saying, 'Yay'."

See more at nzhouseandgarden.co.nz

THIS PAGE Ligularias, hostas and candelabra primulas provide lush groundcover in damp, shady areas around the lake garden.
OPPOSITE (from top) A pergola draped with double-flowering wisteria frames the view through to a hedge carefully clipped by Craig, with a formal fringe of buxus balls. The cowshed paddock provides a clear view of Mt Taranaki and good grazing for Craig's three Angus beef calves.

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Down to earth

Nurseryman Terry Hatch has been propagating his love of plants since he began digging for victory in World War II

WORDS SARAH BERESFORD / **PHOTOGRAPHS** SALLY TAGG

NURSERYMAN AND PLANT breeder Terry Hatch reckons he's been gardening since the age of one, and he's not joking. "I was born digging for victory in World War II," he says, with the distinctive broad grin that accompanies so much of his conversation. "By the time I was two, I was raging at Hitler for blowing up my lettuces, mustard, salad greens and cress with his doodlebugs."

Terry comes from an English family with gardening in the blood. "It's always been a huge part of my family's heritage I'm descended from a branch of Hugenots who escaped from France to England and grew primroses and daffodils to sell in London's Covent Garden."

Terry did a five-year apprenticeship with the Parks Board in England, but it was his 1963 marriage to Pamela Joy that put him on the path to become one of New Zealand's most eminent horticulturalists. For their honeymoon, the young couple decided to go down under.

"We came to New Zealand and decided to stay," he remembers. "I think it is a fabulous place."

Eventually they started a nursery, Joy Plants, at Pukekohe, south of Auckland, where Terry indulged his love of rare plants and embarked on the selective breeding of many species and varieties, including clivias and hellebores. For the next 30 years, the nursery was a haven for plant enthusiasts who came by the bus load to choose from Joy's unique selection of plants.

"We offered a lot of unusual perennials and bulbs for many years, but people don't want them now," says Terry, who's philosophical about gardening's fickle fashions. "We have them all planted out here in beds but there's no demand for them. It is so important that the mother stock is not lost; once they've disappeared, you'll never get them back here again, because it's so hard and expensive to get new plant material into the country."

What's even more remarkable about Terry's huge cache of beloved specimens is that seven years ago it was all moved 2km from Runciman Road to Jericho Road and a new nursery and garden. "I was dead set against making the move for a long time but now I love it."

It helped that Terry and Pamela's son, Lindsey, who has followed him into the horticultural industry, led the way. Lindsey bought and developed the 10ha property 10 years before the move, preparing the land for planting the garden. And their collection of plants is still growing.

"Lindsey's just a clone of me really. He was pushing a wheelbarrow from the age of one," says Terry with a laugh.

After years of breeding and collecting ornamentals, the nursery's big thing these days is managing major native revegetation programmes. "We plant farms and small blocks of land with natives. It's our bread and butter now and some of the jobs have

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THESE PAGES (from far left) The speckled flowers of *Helleborus orientalis*. Terry Hatch with some of his new hybrid dwarf watsonias. Water clings to the leaf of a *Lupinus aureus*. The pitcher-like flowers of a sarracenia. An oldenburgia shrub's furry foliage. The delicate white form of *Geranium maderense*. Terry in his Pukekohe nursery, Joy Plants, with Pippa the dog.

been very big. I've been working on one island project for 28 years.

"You see immense changes. The land needs mending and a lot can happen in a relatively short space of time. We plant a lot of gullies and cliff faces and we don't just use the obvious flax, cabbage trees and manuka. We like to plant rare natives and try to get species that have originated from the particular area.

"I used to grow native New Zealand plants even when I was in England. It's always been a passion for us. From way back we used to spend family holidays working for the Department of Conservation on places like Little Barrier Island, getting rid of cats and transporting bird life.

"Even if the people who own the properties we work on are not doing the planting themselves, they become very involved. They see that it's all about a lasting heritage for future generations."

The plants are propagated at the nursery, often from seed collected by Lindsey, and as usual Terry is not content to go along with the status quo in terms of using natives in conventional ways.

"I've got the perfect native replacement for all the diseased *Buxus japonica* hedges," he says, referring to the fact that this garden staple has been battling severe outbreaks of fungal diseases recently. "*Melicytus obovatus* is a tough plant and makes a brilliant hedge if you don't feed it. We're breeding new varieties from a selection Lindsey has taken from the wild. It's exciting! There are 200 varieties of buxus and so I'm sure we can go on ad infinitum with varieties of melicytus."

Terry is currently trialling a prostrate manuka "lawn" that has formed a thick mat around his house. "It's lovely with all the white flowers. And I've got a pink-flowering species going. Imagine a pink lawn that you don't have to mow!"

It is this combination of knowledge, imagination and delight in what he is working with that has made Terry such a standout in his field. He is currently the World President Emeritus of the International Plant Propagators' Society. "It's an honour really," he says modestly.

Walking back to the shop, Terry stops to point out a stand of alstroemerias. "My auntie had a line of them in her garden when I was a kid and I lusted after them," he says. "I got some stock and they're still here now." A lasting heritage indeed. ■

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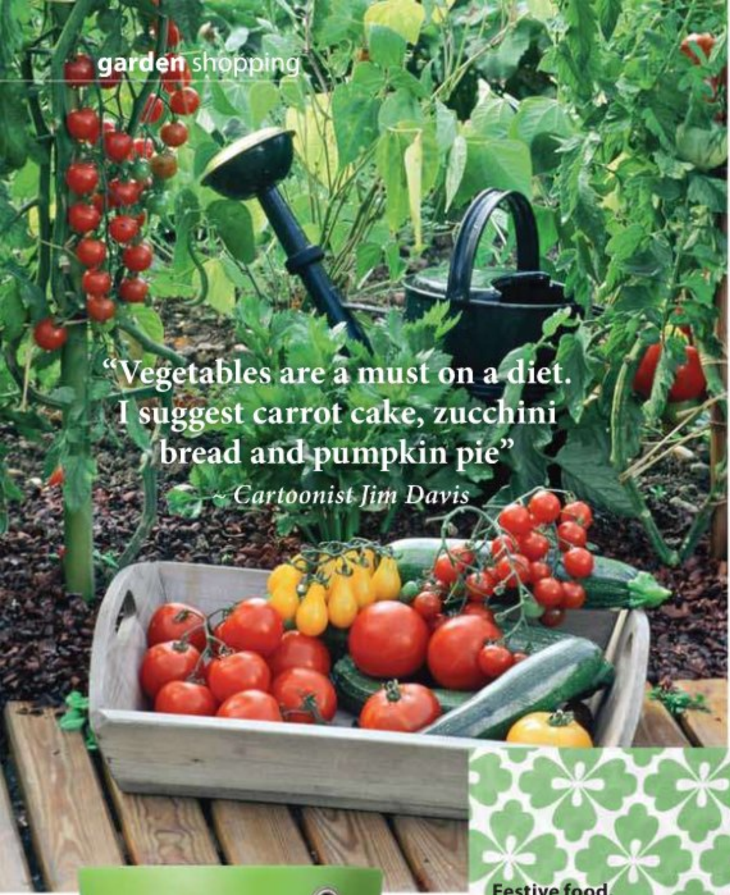

"Vegetables are a must on a diet. I suggest carrot cake, zucchini bread and pumpkin pie"
~ *Cartoonist Jim Davis*

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French Country's embroidered legume **napkins** $86.90 for six from Verde, (09) 486 5052.

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Add extra flair in the kitchen with this colourful **apron** $53 from Tessuti, (09) 378 8490.

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Green & good

Brighten up your kitchen with these garden-inspired goodies

STYLING TRACEY STRANGE / **PHOTOGRAPHS** BELINDA MERRIE

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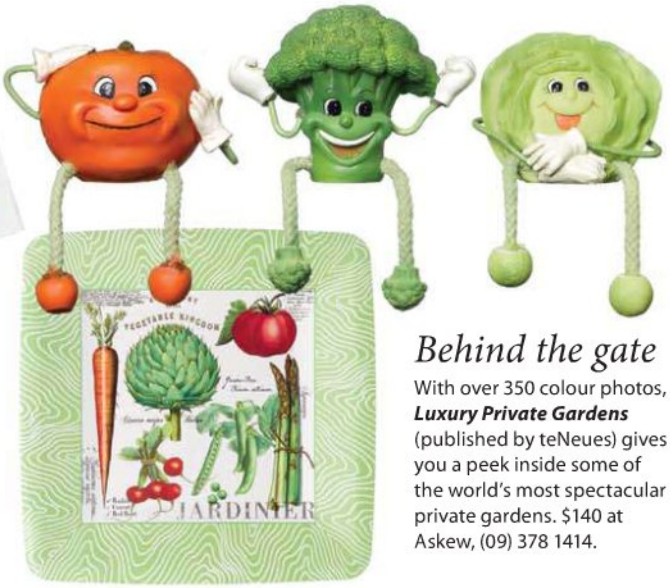
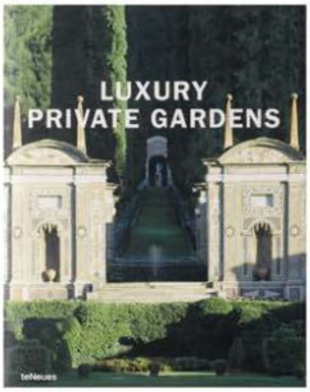
Hand-painted parrot **wall art** $77 from Country Antiques, (09) 630 5252.



FIVE A DAY

Vegetables rarely come cuter than these ceramic kitchen **ornaments** $13 each. Team them with beautifully illustrated paper **napkins** $10 (pack of 20) and **plates** $13.50 (pack of 8), all from Alfresco, (09) 309 3643.



Behind the gate

With over 350 colour photos, ***Luxury Private Gardens*** (published by teNeues) gives you a peek inside some of the world's most spectacular private gardens. $140 at Askew, (09) 378 1414.

VEGE BASKET PHOTOGRAPH: FREDERIC DIDILLON/PHOTOLIBRARY

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SUMMER SCORCHERS

Cracked, dry soil prevents helpful garden organisms – such as worms – from thriving. When water is at a premium, practise good habits to ensure every drop is maximised. Top of the list: mulch constantly; home-made compost is effective and can be ready in weeks. Don't weed if it's just going to leave you with bare dirt – gardens need wild patches to attract beneficial insect life. Install a small water tank just for the garden or use grey water. Water deeply at night, leave your inefficient sprinkler in the shed and check your hose regularly for splits and holes. For deep watering, make a small puncture in the side of a plastic container (the bottom half of a two-litre soft drink bottle works), dig a hole beside a thirsty plant or tree root, pop it in and fill it with water.

GREEN INSPIRATION

Gathering food from the wild is hardly a new concept but the sheer number of people engaging in urban foraging these days signals a modern renaissance. In parks and on river banks and roadsides all around the country, tracts of tasty, edible and often medicinal plants abound. Look for parsley, puha, fennel, chestnuts, blackberries, rosehips and much more on your next city ramble. Find maps and information at urbanforaging.manukadesign.co.nz.

A natural spin-off is the guerilla gardening movement, already in full swing overseas. A Los Angeles group called LA Guerilla Gardening (laguerrillagardening.org) finds small patches of unused or overgrown city-owned dirt, clears them and fills them with donated plants. LAGG volunteers water and weed and the whole community benefits from their random acts of beautification. Even better? The city authorities love them for it.

Cuttings

Snippets of news from the gardening scene

Les Blackwell's Great Barrier Island Bee Co **Manuka Honey & Lemongrass Gardener's Handcream** from Les Floralies will keep dry hands at bay this summer. ***See nzhouseandgarden.co.nz to WIN one of 5 pots.*** To see their new range of SPF30 lip balms, visit lesfloralies.co.nz.

ASK AN EXPERT

I have a tomato plant that has been flowering for a few weeks but the flowers die and there's no sign of fruit. It is planted in a raised bed with a mix of soil and compost and tomato food as per instructions.
Jenny Raynes, Auckland

Jane Wrigglesworth, *NZ Gardener* magazine associate editor, replies: Blossom drop is usually attributed to fluctuating temperatures or stress of some kind, including lack of pollination, too much fertiliser, lack of water and insect damage. You may have planted your tomatoes too early in the season – they grow best if daytime temperatures are 21°C to 29°C. Give them protection if they're planted in the open and try hand-pollination. Use a tiny paintbrush to transfer pollen from one flower to another.

Got a pesky gardening problem you just can't solve? Email your question to: sally.duggan@nzhouseandgarden.co.nz and we'll ask an expert for you.

HOW TO: SOW WILDFLOWERS

Studies have shown mass plantings of wildflowers along motorways help to relax drivers and reduce littering and road rage. In the backyard they simply reduce the need for lawnmowing and enchant the eye.

To grow your own:

1 Remove all grass and weeds from your (preferably sunny) site and break up the top 30mm of soil. Don't mix with fertiliser.

2 Choose packets of mixed seeds in a riot of rainbow colours for a natural "wild" look.

3 Mix the tiny seeds with sand for easier sprinkling and scatter evenly. Cover with a light soil coating and rake the surface lightly.

4 Water two to three times a week as they germinate. Remove weeds when visible. Once the flowers pop through (about eight to 10 weeks), they'll control weeds themselves for the most part and won't need a lot of water.

5 Expect around four months of flowering. Once they die, trim stems to 10cm and leave the cuttings in place so seeds can germinate.

PHOTOGRAPHS: LES FLORALIES (HANDCREAM); NICOLAS LORAN/ ISTOCK (WATERING CAN); RASMUS RASMUSSEN/ ISTOCK (BERRIES); ISTOCK (WILDFLOWERS)

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A fine romance

Blue and green flowers and foliage make an enchanting centrepiece

WORDS & STYLING TRACEY STRANGE / **CONCEPT** VIDA FLORES / **PHOTOGRAPH** BELINDA MERRIE

Make a stunning special-occasion centrepiece using long-stemmed flowers and foliage in muted shades of green and blue. We combined delphinium belladonna, viburnum (snowball), lambs' ears, ruscus and astilbe in a loose but classical arrangement. Start with a sturdy urn and floral foam that's been soaked in water for at least 30 minutes. Beginning with the foliage, ring the edge of the container and then work forward towards the centre. Fill gaps in the foliage with the flowers. To keep the arrangement fresh, change the water every two days. Urn from good floral supply shops or $85 from Vida Flores, (09) 523 5454. Table and chair stylist's own.

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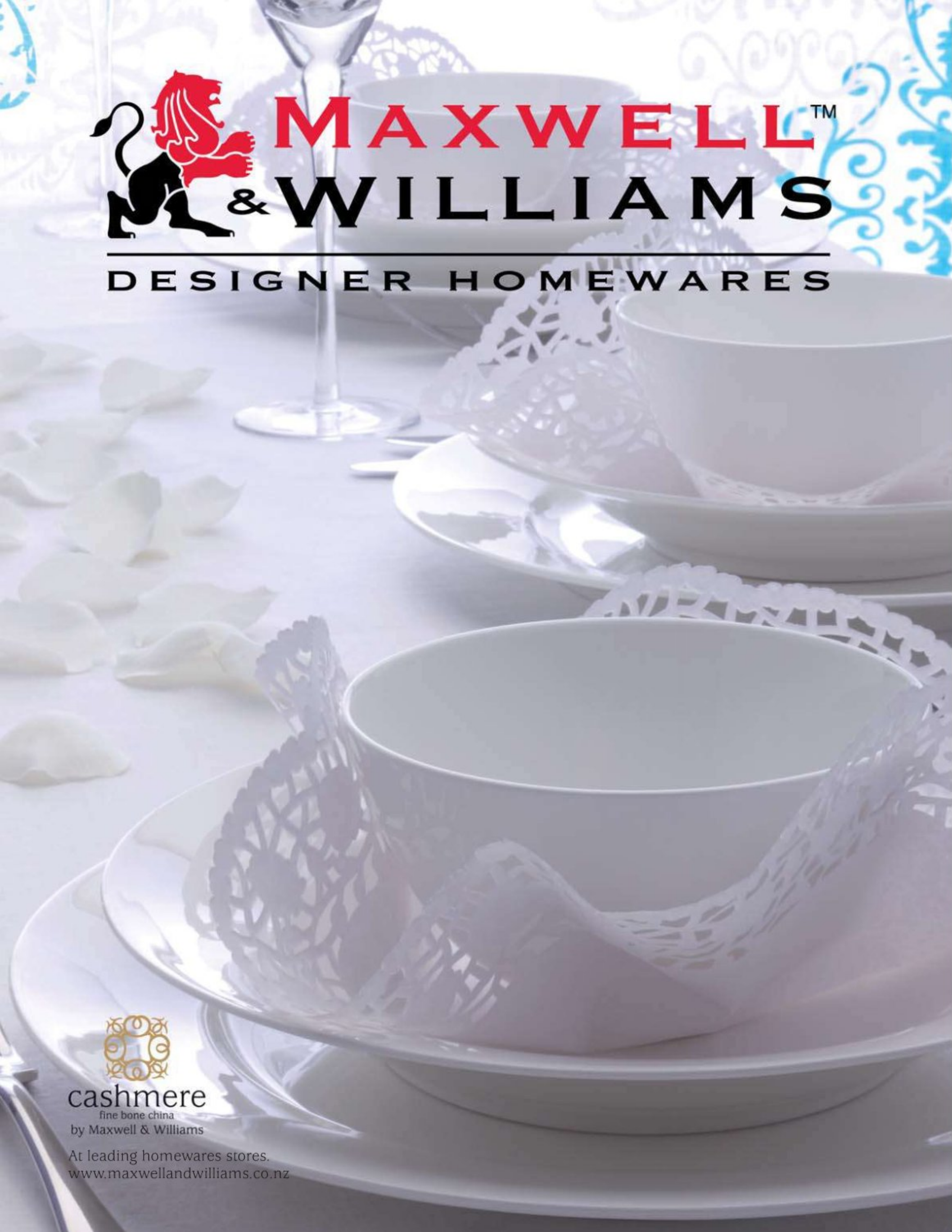

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Twelfth night

Follow tradition and let yuletide merrymaking continue with an alfresco feast

RECIPES & FOOD STYLING BERNADETTE HOGG / **STYLING** CLAUDIA KOZUB /**PHOTOGRAPHS** KIERAN SCOTT

Menu

Apple & Rum Punch

Caramelised Red Onion & Goats' Cheese Tarts

Grilled Honey & Cider Marinated Lamb

Roast Pumpkin & Couscous Salad

Twelfth Night Fruit Cake

Fruit Cake Ice Cream

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Apple and Rum Punch

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Work plan:

A week ahead: Bake the fruit cake.

Up to a week ahead: Make ice cream.

3 days ahead: Prepare punch base. Make caramelised onion for tarts.

2 days ahead: Marinate lamb.

In the morning: Cut out pastry shapes for tarts and place in fridge until required. Make salad.

Close to serving: Mix punch. Assemble and bake tarts. Cook lamb. Add coriander to salad.

IN THE MIDDLE AGES, the twelve days of Christmas were dedicated to feasting and fun (see page 126 for details). It's the perfect excuse to invite friends and family around and carry on the revelry.

Apple and Rum Punch

Cider-based drinks such as wassail and another known as Lambs' Wool are traditional Twelfth Night tipples. It was once customary to pour a little cider on apple trees in order to bless them for a bountiful harvest in the coming year.

4 cups apple juice
½ cup rum
½ cup apple brandy or Calvados
¼ cup brown sugar
1 cinnamon stick
Ice cubes
1 litre apple cider (medium, not dry)
About 1 litre sparkling apple juice
Garnish: mint sprigs, green apple slices, cinnamon sticks

Place half the apple juice in a saucepan with the rum, apple brandy, brown sugar and cinnamon stick. Stir over moderate heat until sugar dissolves then simmer 5 minutes (do not boil).

Leave to cool completely then chill. This base mixture can be made several days before required and stored covered in the refrigerator.

To serve, place the base mixture in a serving bowl or jug with lots of ice. Add remaining apple juice and the cider. Top up with sparkling apple juice and garnish decoratively. Serve in tall glasses.
Makes about 16 cups

Caramelised Red Onion and Goats' Cheese Tarts

The onion for these delectable tarts can be cooked several days before needed and stored covered in the fridge, leaving just a simple assembly and brief bake to be done close to serving.

Caramelised onion:
50g butter
4 tablespoons olive oil
3 large red onions, very finely sliced
1 sprig rosemary, finely chopped
1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
Flaky sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
Tarts:
2 sheets ready-rolled puff pastry
125g soft goats' cheese (eg Puhoi Valley Farm Fresh Smooth & Creamy)
50g pine nuts, lightly toasted
Liquid honey to serve
Rocket for garnish

Onion: Heat butter and oil in a large saucepan or frying pan with a lid. Add onions, stir and add 1 tablespoon water. Cover pan and reduce heat to very low. Gently sweat onions for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking.

Remove lid and cook onions a further 30 minutes, stirring occasionally as they darken and caramelise. Add rosemary and vinegar 5 minutes before the end of cooking. Season to taste, remove from heat and allow to cool.

Tarts: Preheat oven to 220°C. Place a lined baking tray in the oven.

Cut pastry into eight 10cm rounds. Top each round with the caramelised onion mixture, leaving a small rim around the edge. Remove baking tray from oven and carefully place tarts on the hot tray.

Bake tarts for 8 minutes then remove from oven and scatter crumbled cheese on top. Return to oven for 3-4 minutes until cheese just starts to colour and pastry is cooked and golden.

Remove from oven, sprinkle pine nuts over and drizzle with honey. Serve tarts warm, garnished with rocket leaves.
Serves 8 >

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Roast Pumpkin and Couscous Salad

Mixing the couscous with a little oil before adding it to the hot stock helps keep the grains separate; massage it through with your fingers.

1kg pumpkin flesh, cut into 2cm pieces
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 orange, finely grated zest and 2 teaspoons juice
1 tablespoon liquid honey
1 teaspoon each: ground cumin, coriander
½ teaspoon each: ground ginger, cinnamon
2 cups vegetable stock
2 cups couscous, mixed with 1 tablespoon olive oil
400g can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
70g raw pistachios, lightly toasted
70g dried cranberries
1 small red onion, finely sliced
1 cup coriander leaves, chopped
Dressing:
1 tablespoon each: olive oil, liquid honey
Juice of 1 large lemon

Preheat oven to 200°C. Toss pumpkin with oil, zest and juice, honey and spices. Season with salt and pepper. Spread in a lined baking pan and roast until golden and tender, about 30 minutes, turning once.

Bring stock to the boil in a saucepan. Remove from heat and add couscous, stirring with a fork. Cover and stand 5 minutes or until all liquid is absorbed. Use a fork to separate the grains.

In a large bowl place the couscous, pumpkin, chickpeas, nuts, cranberries and onion. Mix dressing ingredients and toss through salad. If making ahead, store salad in the fridge and take out at least 30 minutes before needed. Before serving, mix in coriander. *Serves 8*

Grilled Honey and Cider Marinated Lamb

A boned leg of lamb roasts well on a barbecue but you can cook it in the oven if you prefer. Grilled apples are a great accompaniment: toss thick wedges in a little oil and lemon juice and sauté on a hot grill plate.

1 boned and butterflied leg of lamb (about 1.8-2kg)
Marinade:
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons chopped fresh rosemary
Juice of ½ a lemon
3 tablespoons liquid honey
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 thumb ginger, finely grated
2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
½ cup cider
Salad greens and grilled apples to serve (see above)

Place lamb skin side down on a chopping board and make a few deep insertions in the thickest parts of the flesh (this will allow the flavours to penetrate and the meat to cook more evenly).

Combine marinade ingredients. Place lamb in a large, sealable plastic bag. Pour in marinade, seal the bag and massage marinade into the lamb. Place in a flat dish in the refrigerator for at least 4 hours, up to 2 days if possible, turning several times. Remove lamb from the refrigerator 20 minutes before cooking.

Preheat barbecue until very hot. Take lamb out of bag and sear on both sides. Lower heat to medium and cook covered (with the barbecue lid down or the meat covered with foil, weighted with a pot lid) for 15 minutes a side for medium rare or 20 minutes for medium. Cooking time may vary depending on the barbecue.

Alternatively, cook lamb in a 220°C oven for 20 minutes then lower heat to 175°C and cook for about 40 minutes.

Allow meat to rest about 10 minutes before serving on a platter with salad greens and grilled apples. *Serves 8*

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Twelfth Night Fruit Cake

This is a traditional dense, fruity Twelfth Night cake, aka King Cake, named for the three kings who brought gifts to the baby Jesus at Epiphany. Traditionally a dried pea or bean was baked in the cake and the person who discovered it was crowned master of ceremonies.

- 350g butter
- 350g caster sugar
- 6 eggs, lightly beaten
- 350g flour
- 1 teaspoon each: baking powder, ground allspice, ginger, coriander and cinnamon
- 700g mixed dried fruit (include cherries and mixed peel)
- ⅓ cup rum
- 50-70g blanched almonds, coarsely chopped

Preheat oven to 150°C. Double line the base and sides of a 25cm round cake tin with a layer of brown paper topped with baking paper.

In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar. Gradually beat in eggs. Sift over flour, baking powder and spices and gently fold into the creamed mixture. Add dried fruit, rum and almonds and mix to combine.

Transfer mixture to prepared tin, smooth the surface and tap the tin on the bench to remove any trapped air. (Decorate the top with extra almonds and cherries if desired.) Bake for 2-2½ hours or until the cake is firm to the touch. (If the top browns too quickly, cover with a sheet of foil.)

Allow cake to cool completely in tin. Cake will keep stored in an airtight container for at least 4 weeks. Serve in slices with glasses of chilled sherry. *Makes a 25cm round cake* >

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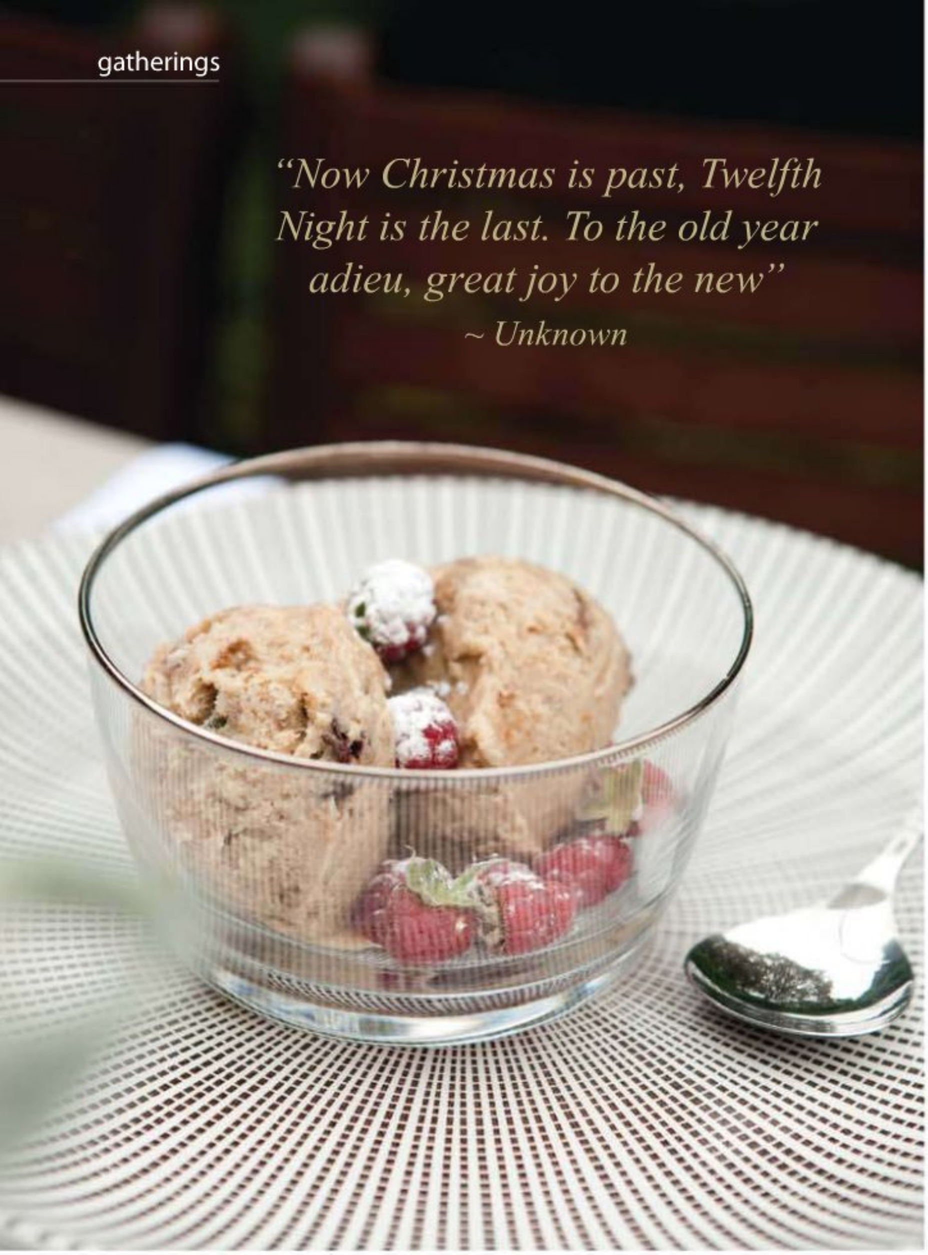
"Now Christmas is past, Twelfth Night is the last. To the old year adieu, great joy to the new"
~ Unknown



Twelfth Night lore

The twelve days of Christmas begin on Christmas night (December 25) and end on Epiphany (January 6). In the Middle Ages this period was one of continuous feasting and merrymaking which climaxed on Twelfth Night (January 5), the traditional end of the festive season.

During the twelve days, traditional roles were relaxed: masters waited on their servants, men were allowed to dress as women and women as men. Often a "Lord of Misrule" was chosen to lead the Christmas revelry.

Twelfth Night was a traditional day for plays or "mummings". Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (aka *What You Will*), first performed around 1600-1602 as part of the celebrations, expanded on the musical interludes and riotous disorder expected of such an occasion.

The traditional yule log, lit on Christmas Day, was left burning until Twelfth Night in order to bring good fortune to the house for the coming year.

Eating lots of mince pies from Christmas Eve until Twelfth Night is said to bring good fortune. However, one should never cut a pie as this is considered to "cut one's luck".

Leaving Christmas decorations hanging after Twelfth Night is said to tempt misfortune.

Fruit Cake Ice Cream

Give tradition a modern, summer-dessert twist by using some Twelfth Night cake to make this no-churn ice cream. It has a light, slightly crystalline texture and rum and raisin flavour.

4 eggs
¼ cup brown sugar
1¼ cups full-cream milk
300ml cream
1¼ cups crumbled Twelfth Night Fruit Cake
2 tablespoons rum
Fresh berries and icing sugar to serve

In a large bowl, beat eggs until fluffy then add sugar and beat well.

Place milk and cream in a saucepan and bring just to simmering point. Pour slowly over the egg mixture, beating constantly. Continue beating until the mixture is light and fluffy and has thickened slightly (about 7 minutes). Fold in fruit cake and rum.

Transfer mixture into a freezer-proof container, cover and freeze for about 1 hour. Remove from the freezer and stir, scraping any crystals from the sides. Return to freezer and repeat once more before allowing to firm completely.

Remove ice cream from the freezer 10 minutes before needed. Serve decorated with fresh berries dusted with icing sugar. Ice cream will keep in the freezer for a week. *Makes about 1 litre*

See more photographs from this feature at nzhouseandgarden.co.nz

Terracotta pots, willow obelisks and plants from Kings Plant Barn, (09) 846 2141; table and chairs, cutlery, crockery, glassware, tablecloth, small glass lanterns, footed glass bowl, place mats and napkins from Freedom, (09) 443 3199; all other items privately owned. Flowers and moss supplied by the National Flower Promotions Group. Thank you to Deby and Peter Ewing and Mandy Sherman for the use of their home.

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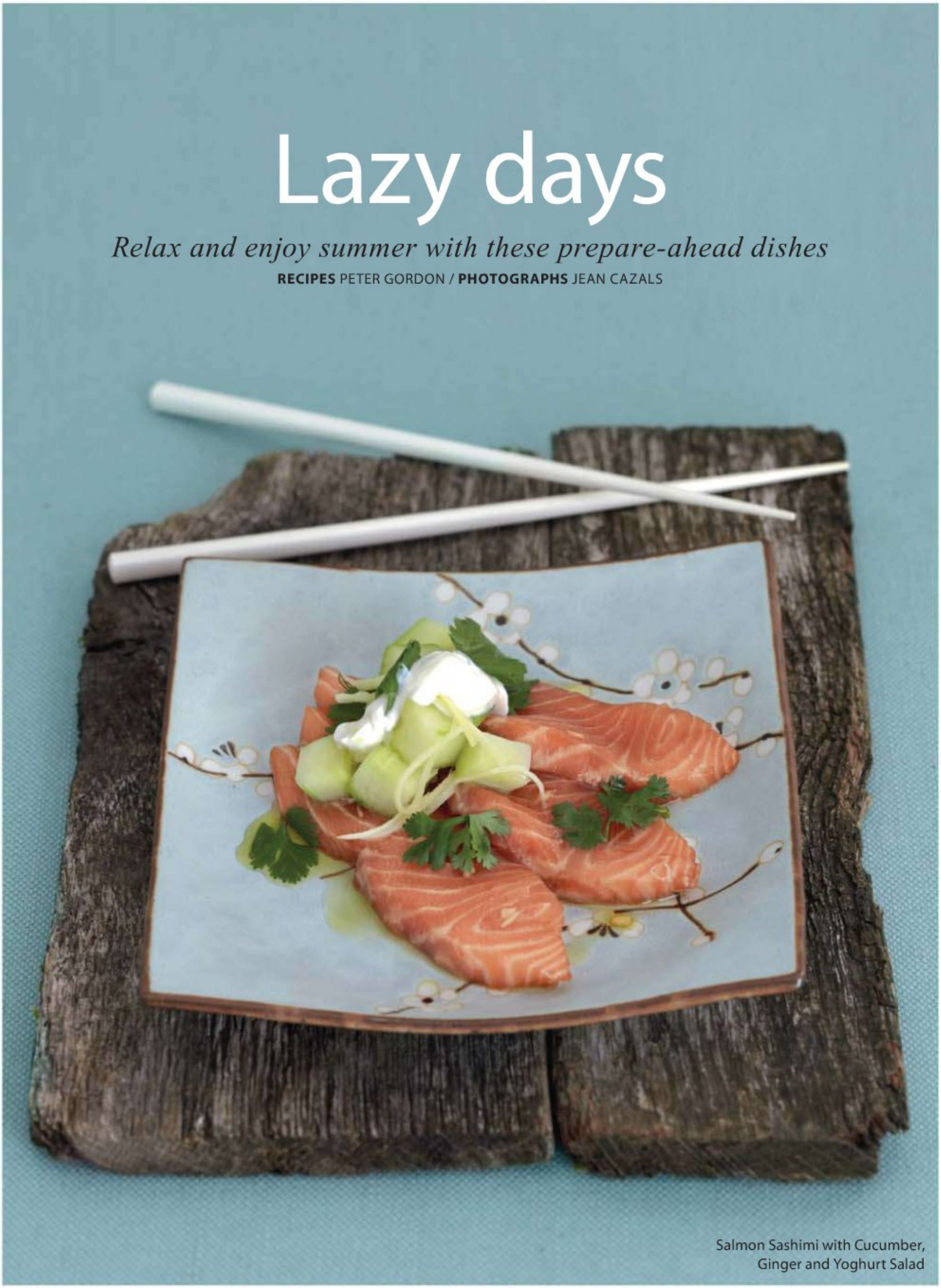
Lazy days

Relax and enjoy summer with these prepare-ahead dishes

RECIPES PETER GORDON / **PHOTOGRAPHS** JEAN CAZALS



Salmon Sashimi with Cucumber, Ginger and Yoghurt Salad

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"Deep summer is when laziness finds respectability"
~ Sam Keen

THE LAST THING you want to do on a hot summer's day is spend hours slaving over a hot stove. These recipes will require some advance preparation but then you'll be able to just stroll into the kitchen later and create a fabulous meal in a matter of minutes.

Salmon Sashimi with Cucumber, Ginger and Yoghurt Salad

(pictured previous page)

This can be made from most fish, including scallops, but the oiliness of salmon works a treat with cucumber. Use a fillet cut from the centre of the fish, at its thickest part. Hapuku, snapper and blue cod are worth trying too.

- ½ cucumber
- Juice from 1 juicy lemon
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 finger fresh ginger
- 4 tablespoons (60ml) soy sauce
- 4 tablespoons (60ml) mirin
- 500-600g salmon fillet, skin and bones removed
- 2 tablespoons Greek yoghurt
- Small handful of coriander leaves

Peel cucumber, halve lengthways and scoop out seeds with a teaspoon. Cut flesh into 1cm dice and toss with lemon juice and salt. Peel ginger then finely chop it all, or julienne half and chop the remainder (depending on your knife skills). Mix the julienned ginger (or half the chopped ginger, if you chopped it all) into cucumber and place in a covered dish in the fridge for up to 12 hours.

Mix soy and mirin with remaining ginger and place in a shallow dish. Slice salmon into 5mm-thick slices and, when you're almost ready to serve, place them in marinade. Marinate 2-3 minutes each side then remove to a plate to drain.

Drain excess liquid from cucumber, reserving 1 teaspoon to mix into yoghurt.

To serve, divide salmon between 6 chilled plates. Lay cucumber on top and dollop on the yoghurt. Sprinkle with a little sea salt and scatter coriander over. *Serves 6 as a starter*

Poached Veal with Anchovy Mayonnaise and Potato Salad

This is based on the classic Italian dish vitello tonnato, except I've replaced the tuna in the sauce with anchovies and paired the veal with potato salad. Rose veal (see Small Bites, page 138) would be great for this recipe, which needs to be started the day before it is to be eaten.

- 600-700g veal loin, trimmed of fat and sinews
- 2 litres rich veal stock (or well-flavoured chicken stock)
- 6 anchovy fillets
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh tarragon
- 500g small waxy potatoes (red-skinned ones look good)
- 1 tablespoon cider vinegar or other white vinegar
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- Handful of flat-leaf parsley, shredded
- 2 spring onions, thinly sliced

The veal can be cooked in 1 piece or cut it into 4 smaller pieces. Tie it reasonably tightly with string or ask your butcher to do so – this keeps it firm during poaching and makes it cook more evenly.

Dust a chopping board with a teaspoon of fine salt and roll the veal in this to season.

Bring stock to the boil in a saucepan large enough to hold the veal without overcrowding it. Lower meat in gently. Bring back to the boil then turn to a simmer for 5 minutes before turning heat off.

Depending on the thickness of the veal, leave it for 8-12 minutes for medium rare (a 5cm-diameter piece will take about 10 minutes). Remove from the stock and leave to cool then place covered in the fridge overnight.

Chop anchovies finely or pound in a mortar and pestle. Mix in lemon juice, then mayonnaise. Add tarragon and enough cold water to make a consistency like thick, runny cream.

Boil potatoes in salted water until just cooked then drain. When cool enough to handle but still quite warm, cut into quarters and toss with vinegar then mix in olive oil, parsley and spring onions.

To serve, bring the veal to room temperature then snip the string off and slice meat thinly.

Divide potato salad between 4 plates and lay veal on top then drizzle mayonnaise over. *Serves 4* >

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Poached Veal with Anchovy Mayonnaise and Potato Salad

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Beans and Tomatoes
Braised with Dill and Chilli

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Beans and Tomatoes Braised with Dill and Chilli

This Turkish-inspired dish was my favourite last summer. I kept making it from different fresh beans teamed with borlotti or broad beans. Chickpeas or lentils mixed in at the end work well too. It is better eaten after at least six hours or even the next day. The green colour fades a little but this doesn't affect the flavour at all.

- 1 white-fleshed onion, peeled and thinly sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled and sliced
- 1 red chilli, coarsely chopped (more or less to taste)
- 2 tablespoons neutral oil, eg sunflower, canola or rice bran oil
- 2 tomatoes, cut into large chunks (unpeeled)
- 200g beans, trimmed
- 3 tablespoons water
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup podded and peeled broad beans
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons chopped dill (use the stalks and keep it chunky)
- 1½ tablespoons lemon juice

In a pot which has a tight-fitting lid, sauté onion, garlic and chilli in sunflower oil until softened but not coloured. Stir in tomatoes and cook 1 minute then add beans, water and salt. Cover and cook over high heat for 2 minutes then turn down to medium and cook a further 2 minutes. Stir in broad beans, put lid back on and cook another 2 minutes.

Take off heat and stir in some freshly ground black pepper and the olive oil and dill. Leave to cool then stir in lemon juice. Serve at room temperature. *Serves 6 as a side dish*

Berry and Yoghurt Sponge Finger Trifle

This dessert couldn't be simpler. Italian sponge fingers, aka savoiardi biscuits, are available from most supermarkets. Mine were chocolate and vanilla flavour but plain ones will be just as good. The trifle can be made up to 12 hours in advance and you can make one large dessert or individual servings. If you don't want to use wine, try something like Phoenix apple and feijoa juice.

- 120g sponge fingers
- 100ml sweet dessert wine
- 1 punnet raspberries
- 500ml (2 cups) cream
- 1 cup Greek yoghurt
- 2 tablespoons liquid honey (any type)
- 1 punnet strawberries, hulled and sliced
- 1 tablespoon icing sugar

Lay sponge fingers on a plate and drizzle wine over, making sure they all get some. Line a large bowl or moulds with fingers, drizzling over any excess liquid.

Place a third of the raspberries in a mixing bowl and mash roughly with a whisk. Add cream and beat to soft peaks. Add yoghurt and honey and whisk to firm peaks.

Layer half the strawberries in the bowl then spoon in half the cream. Layer remaining strawberries in and then remaining cream. Place the remaining raspberries on top. Chill trifle for at least 1 hour or up to 12 hours. Dust with icing sugar before serving. *Serves 6*

For two more recipes – Chilled Pea, Kumara & Mint Soup and Roast Lemon Chicken, Nashi & Avocado Salad – see nzhouseandgarden.co.nz

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Strawberries & cream

This scrumptious cheesecake is a real crowd pleaser

RECIPE & STYLING JO WILCOX / **PHOTOGRAPHS** KIERAN SCOTT

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1

2

3

4

White Chocolate and Strawberry Cheesecake

Topping:
1 cup finely chopped strawberries
½ cup strawberry jam
¼-½ cup water
Base:
250g packet plain biscuits, crushed
125g butter, melted
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
Filling:
1 cup (150g) white chocolate buttons
397g can sweetened condensed milk
2 teaspoons powdered gelatin
2 tablespoons warm water
500g cream cheese, softened
1 cup cream, softly whipped

1 *Topping:* Mix strawberries, jam and water in a small saucepan and simmer gently for 4-5 minutes until syrupy. Cool.

2 *Base:* Line a 26cm springform tin with baking paper. Combine biscuit crumbs, butter and cinnamon and press evenly into base. Chill while making filling.

3 *Filling:* Melt chocolate and condensed milk in a microwave on medium power in short bursts, stirring until smooth. Sprinkle gelatin over water and leave 5 minutes to swell. Beat cream cheese until smooth then reduce speed and slowly beat in the chocolate mixture. Dissolve gelatin on medium power for 15 seconds or over a bowl of hot water until clear.

4 Fold gelatin and whipped cream into cream cheese mixture and pour into tin. Swirl through about half the strawberry syrup. Refrigerate cheesecake for at least 3 hours or overnight. Serve in wedges, with the remaining strawberry syrup spooned over. *Serves 10-12*

FLORAL PLATES AND CAKE FORKS FROM THE HOMESTORE, NEWMARKET, AUCKLAND

Cook's notes

- The strawberry topping requires ¼-½ cup of water, depending on the consistency of your jam. Home-made jam is often runnier than commercial preserves, so it will probably require less liquid.
- Any plain, sweet biscuit is suitable for the base but wine biscuits (eg vanilla wine) are a popular choice.
- A jar or glass is useful for pressing the biscuit base firmly and evenly into the tin.
- White chocolate buttons from the supermarket (aka Melts) work well in this cheesecake and are easy to melt. Alternatively, use 150g of bar chocolate broken into squares.
- When melting the chocolate and condensed milk in the microwave, do so in short bursts on medium power and stir often. Alternatively, melt them in a bowl set over a pan of simmering water.
- In warmer weather, increase the amount of gelatin in the filling by about 1 teaspoon to help the dessert keep its shape.
- Spreadable and fat-reduced ("lite") cream cheeses do not set as well as regular cream cheese. If using either of these, increase the amount of gelatin in the filling by 1 teaspoon.
- For variation, other berries or a mixture of berries can be used instead of strawberries and dark chocolate can replace the white chocolate.
- This cheesecake will keep in the fridge for up to four days.
- Cheesecake is believed to have originated in ancient Greece; history records that it was served to athletes during the first Olympic Games in 776BC. The recipe consisted of cheese, flour and egg.
- New York restaurateur Arnold Reuben (of Reuben sandwich fame) is credited with inventing the cream cheese-style cheesecake in about 1930.

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THIS PAGE Barry (Baz) Feickert and Bolly the chocolate Labrador discuss the finer points of pinot noir on one of their daily vineyard walks. Sisters (from left) Wendy Jones, Debbie Sutton and Suzie Feickert take a breather during Wine Marlborough.

Sister act

Awatere Valley's Blind River Wines is thriving on sibling know-how

WORDS YVONNE MARIE LORKIN / **PHOTOGRAPHS** JOSEPH KELLY

"HI, DEBBIE, IT'S John Key speaking" was the last thing Debbie Sutton of Blind River Wines expected to hear when the phone rang one morning as she was working from home while her two preschoolers were at day-care.

"I was trying to figure out which part of the wine industry this John Key character was from," says Debbie. And then it suddenly dawned on her.

Knowing he was partial to a nice drop, Debbie had sent the Prime Minister a few bottles of Blind River wine after they won Best Sauvignon Blanc, Best Pinot Noir and Champion Wine of the Show at the 2009 Boutique Wine Awards.

"He rang to say thanks because, by a complete fluke, the wine landed on his desk on his birthday. He congratulated us and said that he'd had a bottle of our pinot and really enjoyed it. I was floored!"

After talking at length about living in London and their various reasons for returning home, the now very chummy Debbie and John bid each other adieu.

"He was just really friendly and chatty. Those small gestures and personal touches really matter – that's also something we try to bring to our wine."

It's the personal touch, combined with business skills and persistence, that have made Blind River quite the success story at a time when fortunes for many in the wine industry appear somewhat grim.

Named after a stream south of their Marlborough property, Blind River Wines was founded in 2003 by Barry (Baz) and Dianne Feickert, but in 2007 they handed the reins over to their three daughters.

Baz had been a marine engineer in a former life and his need to be outdoors when he returned from long stretches at sea led to their owning a pine plantation, an orchard and a farm – though their three daughters never took an interest.

"Then Deb went to Roseworthy Agricultural College to study wine a few years ago and wine seemed like something they were all keen on. So I said what about growing grapes? That's how Di and I ended up buying our bare-land block in 1998 and planting vines," says Baz.

These days Debbie handles the winemaking, sales and marketing;

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THIS PAGE Gathering for lunch at the family home in Marlborough; the spread includes Dianne Feickert's (seated at right) "famous" orange muffins. The Blind River sisters mix and mingle with wine enthusiasts at the Wine Marlborough Weekend. The two Feickert family wine brands, Blind River and The Sisters.

middle sister Suzie Feickert supervises the financial accounts and logistics and youngest sister, Wendy Jones, manages their two vineyards. Nothing unusual about that, you might think, but these three women manage to operate successfully while living at opposite ends of the country.

Debbie and her husband moved to Auckland not long after returning from London, where she had enjoyed a successful career in PR. Suzie lives in Wellington and Wendy in Marlborough's Awatere Valley, near the family's pinot noir and sauvignon blanc vineyards.

Despite the distance, the three are in constant contact, and Suzie and Debbie return to the vineyard regularly throughout the year to work the harvest, oversee the winemaking and bottling and attend events such as the Wine Marlborough Weekend and Marlborough Wine Festival.

Leaving the girls to focus on the business end of things has meant Baz can concentrate on what he loves best – being out in the vineyard, zooming around on his beloved hi-tech heavy machinery. He also employs the latest computer technology to understand and manage the 27ha of vineyards, assisted by Wendy, who lives in a cottage on the property, and his trusty chocolate Labrador, Bolly.

Mum Dianne looks after all local and web-based sales, filling orders and despatching wine as well as helping in the vineyard. She also has a secret sales weapon. "Mum's orange muffins are legendary," says Debbie. "We got a big order from Coles in Australia after we fed them Mum's muffins."

So is there anything else to their winning formula? "I think it's that we're just really thorough," says Debbie. "When it comes to growing the grapes, Dad's a real perfectionist and he's always driving for the highest quality. We don't have a massive marketing budget so that's where the ability to create effective PR is an advantage."

"Maybe living in separate parts of the country helps," suggests Wendy with a laugh. Debbie chips in: "It's good having all three of us present when the Blind River wines are out there in the public eye, like at tastings and trade fairs, because we each have something important to contribute and we're always learning from each other.

"Suzie has a great eye for detail so I always consult her on things to do with labelling and artwork, production and marketing materials. Whereas I'm used to running businesses so accounts make sense to me. You could say Suzie's an accountant who wishes she was a marketer and I'm a marketer who should've been an accountant."

Sibling relationships can often be less than harmonious, especially where family businesses are concerned, but for Debbie, Suzie and Wendy it seems to work perfectly.

For Dianne's orange muffin recipe visit nzhouseandgarden.co.nz

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A **salad bowl** with an air- and liquid-tight lid is exceedingly handy. The Tupperware Alegra set has a 1.5-litre bowl, $42, or a crowd-friendly 3.5-litre bowl, $61, 0800 800 818.

Baste your festive ham with Aromatics **glaze**, $15 from Farro Fresh and other stockists, (06) 878 4723.

Nature's Country Gold specialises in unique **honey** made with integrity. $7.50 per 250g, (07) 854 9204.

Acrylic **Ice Tube pitchers** have a removable ice bar for freezing so drinks stay cool without being diluted. $45 from Uncle Zito's, (03) 546 9739.

Small bites

Entertaining editor Sally Butters selects good things to eat, try and buy

Hearty Kiwi **beef patties** are low-fat, low-salt, high-vege and taste great. Made in Hawke's Bay. $10 per eight-pack from supermarket freezers, heartykiwifoods.com.

To make a crispy coating for fish, mix a can of beer (minus a swig or two) into a Fogdog **batter mix**. Original, Cajun or Lemon Pepper, $7 from supermarkets and tackle shops.

This Joseph Joseph large **salad bowl** and server set is ideal for outdoor meals. $85 from homeware stores or call 0800 182 022.

Coming up roses
New Zealand-grown rose veal is succulent, lean and tender and comes from calves raised on high-welfare farms. Try this unique new pink meat in Peter Gordon's recipe on page 130. Order from gourmetdirect.com, 0800 737 800.

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NZ HOUSE & GARDEN

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Caramel nut fudge
Carrot and poppy seed cake
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Date and nut loaf
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Lemon tart with hazelnut crust
Nashi, ginger, peanut and sesame salad
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Corsica white **bath towel** $39.95 from Nest; Cararra **hand towel** $28.50 from Tessuti; glass **goblet** containing cotton wool $49 from Republic; all other items owners' own.

Water world

Soak up our top tips for the very latest in bathroom design trends

WORDS DEB BARTLETT / **PHOTOGRAPHS** JACKIE MEIRING

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Bathroom on these pages designed by Andrew Meiring of Andrew Meiring Architecture; custom-made cabinetry and mirror cabinet; CaesarStone vanity top; Memento basins by Villeroy & Boch; Cox tap by Paini; on benchtop: **room spray** $123.80, cylinder **vase** $39, finger **coral** $216.60, Catherine Memmi scented **candles** in Poivre Noir and Poivre Rose $110 each, all from Corso de' Fiori; cube **clock** $165 from Republic; white glass vase and orchid stylist's own; under bench: Missoni black **towels** $138 each and large Missoni Homer **bath towel** $301, all from Tessuti.

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LEFT Shower box custom-made; black porcelain tiles; details of reflected vanity and basin as before; black **bath mat** $49.95 from Nest; bottles in the shower owners' own.

BELOW Ungaro guest **towel** $48.50 from Corso de' Fiori; Jonathan Adler horse **tray** $360 from Askew; **shaving mitt** $12.95, Blokes **soap** $14.95 and **shaving brush** $9.50, all from Republic; finger **coral** $216.60 from Corso de' Fiori. Thank you to Cali, Alistair, Phoebe and Hugo Petrie for the use of their home.

CRYSTAL TAPS, FLAT-SCREEN TVs, beverage fridges and loungers all feature as must-haves in top-end bathroom building or renovation projects on overseas websites. Kiwis seem to be an altogether more down-to-earth bunch when it comes to the smallest room in the house. What we're really after, say the experts, is something that functions well as a busy family work station in the morning, yet effectively doubles as a serene, personal retreat when the adults want an evening soak in the tub. For the latest trends in bathrooms, it's all eyes to organic shapes, futuristic technology, ambient lighting, earthy colours and clever storage solutions, all underpinned with a touch of luxury.

Designers on trend

Key words for new bathroom looks are "softer", "warmer", "earthy" and "natural", says kitchen and bathroom designer Debra DeLorenzo from DeLorenzo Design.

"I'd also add 'bigger' to that. These days, the bath is more likely to be in the en suite than the family bathroom because, once the kids are old enough to shower, it's most often used by Mum," she says. "I use natural stone tiles a lot, particularly marble, granite and limestone. Tones are still very earthy and new wood tends to be paler than in the past."

Hide the loo, use a mix of subtle and glamorous lighting and create a mood that suits your needs, advises Debra.

Award-winning bathroom designer Robyn Labb says materials play a major role in current trends.

"I'm a big fan of tiles and will often use the same natural stone throughout, but finish it in three ways." Well-sealed sandstone, for instance, can be honed on the floor, glossed on the walls and brush-hammered at the top. "There's consistency, but there are also colour variations and plenty of lovely texture."

Bathrooms are becoming more streamlined, says Robyn. Basins are set flush into vanity tops, rather than protruding, and lighting is hidden away. But baths are getting bigger. "That feeling of retreating to your bathroom to relax is more important than ever." >

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ABOVE Bathroom designed by Joanne Gooding of Bespoke on Khyber; dark-stained oak vanity custom-made by Bespoke on Khyber; water-heated towel rail from FL Bone; customised Carrara marble floor tiles from Granite Workshop; on the vanity: tall blue **vase** $39, **bath foam** $38.90 and small blue **vase/tealight** $29, all from Corso de' Fiori; luxury **rubber duck** $16.50 from Askew; on the towel rail: large Cararra **towel** $148 and medium Cararra **towel** $65.50, both from Tessuti; on the window ledge: small blue **vases/tealights** $29 each, opaque aqua blue **hurricane** $40.50 and scented **candle in glass** $110, all from Corso de' Fiori; bath mat owners' own. Thank you to Caroline and Peter Knowles for the use of their house.

TOP RIGHT Cararra **face cloth** $17.50 from Tessuti; **bath foam** $38.90 from Corso de' Fiori; luxury **rubber duck** $16.50 from Askew; bath rack and toy car owners' own.

OPPOSITE PAGE Bathroom (all pictures) designed by Sue Gillbanks from Kitchens by Design; custom-made cabinetry in stained oak veneer; floor tiles, benchtop and splashback honed natural stone in Tundra Grey from SCE Stone & Design; in cabinet (main picture): Missoni **hand towels** $50.20 each from Tessuti; white Corsica **hand towels** $14.95 each and Corsica **bath towel** $39.95, all from Nest; on benchtop: Tuscan sandstone **tumbler** $32.95, **soap pump** $59.95 and **soap dish** $19.95, all from Nest; Savon **soap** $39.90 from Askew; vintage Japanese **wall panel** $299 from Republic; Rainyday **vase** $69.95 from Nest. Thank you to Annette Daly for the use of her home.

Bathroomware

Baths and sinks are undergoing a gradual metamorphosis from square, minimalist, rather masculine shapes to slightly more organic, softer, curved and feminine forms, says Michael Reid, Design Centre manager at Kohler.

Wall-hung vanities and toilets, softer, more ambient lighting, earthy colours and pale timbers are other bathroom trends evident in 2010, he says.

Caroma Industries general manager Glenn Lewis pinpoints his customers' increased interest in wall-hung toilet suites – an option that satisfies both aesthetic and practical considerations.

"That's driven by the launch of concealed cisterns, such as the Caroma Invisi Series II," says Glenn. "Concealed cisterns save valuable space and have uninterrupted visual appeal. Wall-hung toilet suites not only look stylish, they also offer ease of cleaning."

"Bathing is something we see as being very indulgent," says Mike Stanton, sales and marketing manager with Paterson Trading. Their Villeroy & Boch range of baths exemplifies this philosophy, particularly freestanding styles such as the La Belle and Aveo. "You can put them anywhere. Baths no longer need to be relegated to the corner of the house. Put one in the master bedroom, next to a sunny window with great views."

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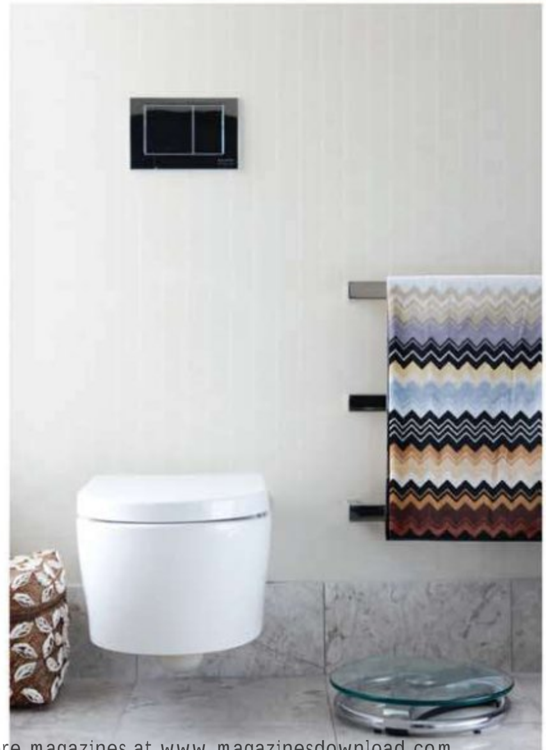
Showers & tapware

The trends in shower technology are answering a different set of requirements from baths, Mike emphasises. Showers are an invigorating and refreshing experience, designed to wake you up.

"Decades of development and research have gone into creating the engineering that underpins all Grohe showers. Our shower heads are funky and ergonomically designed, ranging from old-fashioned to slimline and eco-friendly."

Electronics in the bathroom are becoming significant, says Kohler's Michael Reid, whether in heated toilet seats or shower mixers. "These days, the temperature and water pressure of your shower rose can be digitally programmed and set to your personal specifications. Mum might like her shower at 37°C with a light flow, while Dad's preference is 40°C and heavy. That's achievable at the touch of a button."

Tapware customers are buying from an eco-friendly perspective too, says Caroma's Glenn Lewis. "The Ministry for the Environment is currently evaluating the use of the Australian Water Efficiency Labelling Scheme (WELS), which allows consumers to rate styling against water efficiency. Caroma was the first supplier to provide a WELS rating on its sanitaryware and tapware products." >



TOP LEFT Honed natural stone floor tiles in Tundra Grey from SCE Stone & Design; vintage Japanese **wall panel** $299 from Republic; Missoni **hand towel** $50.20 from Tessuti; Coast **soap dish** $19.95 from Nest; Glasshouse **soap** $19.90 from Republic.

LEFT 'Rick Rack' wallpaper in Ivory from Swinson Wallcoverings; honed natural stone floor tiles in Tundra Grey from SCE Stone & Design; **basket** with shells $69 from Republic; wall-hung toilet from SpazioCasa; Siroco **towel rail** by DCS; large Missoni **towel** $283.50 from Tessuti; bathroom scales owner's own.

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Bathroom (top and bottom) designed by Andrew Meiring of Andrew Meiring Architecture; green glass mosaic tiles; stainless-steel heated towel rail by DCS; on towel rail: Hotel ribbed **bath towels** $39.95 each from Nest; on floor: **laundry basket** $129 from Nest; on bath: green Cararra **hand towel** $28.50 from Tessuti; Ben the crochet **bear** $44.20 from Corso de' Fiori; vase stylist's own.

BELOW Timber slat vanity custom-made; Vero basin; Cox tap by Paini; on basin: Catherine Memmi **body cream** $55 and **shower gel** $55, both from Corso de' Fiori; **coral** $35 from Republic; on rack: green Cararra **hand towel** $28.50 from Tessuti; Hotel white ribbed **hand towel** $14.95 from Nest.

Storage

European designers can usually be counted on to marry good design and intelligent engineering successfully and the top bathroom trend at Germany's recent ISH09 trade fair – the industry's most prestigious – is for high-end mirrored cabinets, says Andrew Burns, marketing manager for St Michel.

"Eye-level storage has so many benefits and recent innovation in Europe means we'll be seeing highly configured mirrored cabinets that come fitted out with a host of functions. They're powered for things like electric toothbrushes and shavers, while demisters and lighting are built in. Storage is cleverly configured to maximise the space, complete with such details as magnets to hold your tweezers and nail scissors."

Looks are a priority too, says Andrew. "Our best seller, the Dante, has a mirror that extends beyond the edges so, when the cabinet is recessed into the wall, the mirror looks like it is floating."

When it comes to design, consider your vanity and storage as the centre-pieces. The colours, materials and shapes come first, and everything around them flows from that. And, though a bathroom should look good and feel nice, it must also function well. Eye-level cabinets with split mirrors, for example, let you open the door while still being able see yourself. Wide vanity drawers eliminate the need for bending and tall, narrow shelving units mean frequently used items such as towels and body lotions are always at your fingertips. >

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Laundry designed by Joanne Gooding of Bespoke on Khyber; custom-made cabinetry by Bespoke on Khyber; Pistachio wall tiles from Middle Earth; Juparana Persa granite benchtop from Granite Workshop; tap from Robertson; Miele Honeycomb W2104 washer; Fisher & Paykel dryer; Sunbeam Ultra iron owner's own; on the bench: Underwater **soap pump** $49.95 and **tray** $36.95, both from Nest; **soap stand** $42 from Askew; Corsica **hand towels** $14.95 each from Nest; in the washing machine: Corsica **bath towels** $39.95 each from Nest; **tea towel** $8.95 from Milly's; on the floor: **laundry basket** $79 from Nest.

Laundries

No prizes for guessing what most home-owners want in the laundry: plenty of bench space, oodles of storage and a tub big enough to soak the whole team's shirts after the game. Though an architect working on a new home can simply double – even triple – the floor space once assigned to this area, designers refitting an existing laundry need to be canny.

That's made easier thanks to innovative, design-driven products, such as the Supertub Workstation from Robinhood, that take care of the lot – from the wide, deep drawers and streamlined stainless benchtop to the integrated underbench plumbing (which allows you to use the washing machine even when the tub's full).

Fold-out ironing boards, sturdy hooks, towel racks and plenty of shelving all make a laundry practical and user-friendly. And something as simple as a tiled splashback on the wall between a robust granite benchtop and white overhead cupboards can add a splash of crisp, clean colour. ■

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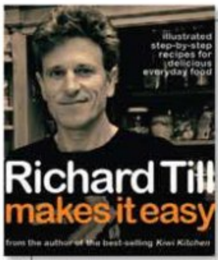
Kerry Engelbrecht browses for the best reading



RICHARD TILL MAKES IT EASY

Richard Till

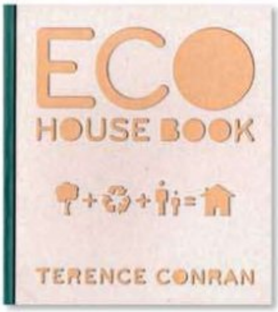
(publisher and NZ distributor Renaissance Publishing, 160 pages, $35, paperback)

There's little that's flash or fancy about this cookbook. TV chef Richard Till likes to keep things real. The text looks as if it was banged out on an old typewriter (perhaps he should have changed the ribbon – it's a little hard to read) and the photos appear to have been shot in his own kitchen and backyard, without any attempt at stage management. The slightly messy results could be a refreshing change after a diet of glossy perfection or enough to kill any culinary aspirations, depending on how much you enjoy Till's brand of Kiwi nostalgia. This is a collection of recipes from his everyday family food file, plus a few dinner party dishes, all aimed at novice cooks. In order to "make it easy", there are step-by-step images for each and straightforward instructions. Food our mothers may have cooked dominates – devils on horseback, chicken liver pâté (made in the trusty Ralta), courgette fans, duchesse potatoes, schnitzel, baked apples, crêpes, pavlova with jelly crystals on top – all prepared and plated in kitchenware that many of us see now only in op shops. With some classic tea towels too, of course. *Sally Butters is NZ House & Garden's entertaining editor*

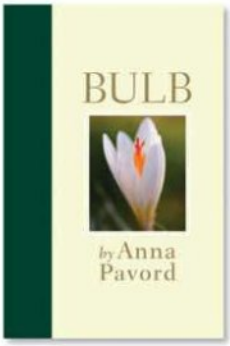
ECO HOUSE BOOK

Terence Conran

(publisher Conran Octopus, NZ distributor Hachette NZ, 272 pages, $79, hardback)



You know eco-friendliness has reached the mainstream when British design guru Terence Conran devotes a book to the subject. As he says: "Now sustainability is the 'new normal'." An appropriately earthy tone is set by the sturdy double-layered cover of recycled cardboard with cut-out lettering, though it's somewhat at odds with the glossy contents. There's advice on how to green up your home, plus sections on renovating, extending and building from scratch. Earthen and straw bale houses get the eco-tick; the pros and cons of alternative forms of energy – solar, wind turbine and biomass boilers – are explored and so too are energy-efficient lighting and appliances, the benefits of cows grazing on a rooftop pasture and the new prefabricated removable m-houses. Seventeen detailed international case studies, including a Norwegian wood cabin, a New York loft and a Sydney terraced house, illustrate the various theories. All the usual environmentally responsible options are covered, such as using reclaimed building materials, buying pre-loved furniture, growing your own veges and composting scraps. It's a worthy tome, dense with information and flawlessly executed, yet there's the lingering sense that carbon footprint reduction may not be Conran's true passion. *Shelley Bridgeman is a freelance writer*



BULB

Anna Pavord

(publisher Mitchell Beazley, NZ distributor Hachette NZ, 544 pages, $70, hardback)

"It began," writes Anna Pavord, "with the tulip – of all bulbs, the most desirable. But, even in the middle of that love affair, I was growing masses of other bulbs." Thus she lays the foundation for a vibrant read – and *Bulb* sure is vibrant. If all Englishwoman Pavord hoped to do was tease a few green-fingered tinkerers into planting the odd bulb in their patch, she would have succeeded with the photos alone. Even before you read the text, the lavish illustrations draw you in. But Pavord's style of writing is fun and informative too – a mix of historical and cultural information, delivered in her typically lyrical fashion. The author of best-seller *The Tulip*, Pavord knows her stuff, but fans might be slightly disappointed with this volume – not because it stints on coverage (600 of her favourite bulbs are featured), but because she doesn't have room to go into as much detail as she did in her previous work. *The Tulip*, after all, covered one genera; this tome covers hundreds. But for fresh ideas and inspiration it's a fabulous reference book to come back to time and again, with an extensive calendar at the back showing the blooming season for each bulb. Pavord has combined fine writing and practical experience in another masterwork. *Jane Wrigglesworth is NZ Gardener's associate editor*

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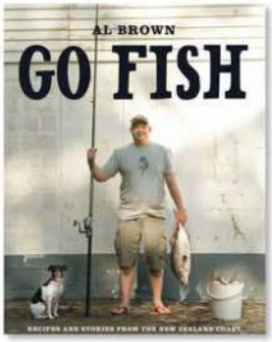
GO FISH

Al Brown

(publisher and NZ distributor Random House, 344 pages, $65, hardback)



Acclaimed Wellington restaurateur Alister Brown has two great passions – cooking and fishing. It's obvious he also loves living in Aotearoa, land of maritime beauty, camping grounds, seaside holidays and fabulous, fresh kai moana. His enthusiasm for catching, preparing and sharing seafood from our sea and shores shines through in this beautifully designed book. The dust jacket unfolds to reveal a chart of fish species. Inside the front cover is an acetate envelope containing a red cellophane fish, for fortune telling. The text is eloquently written, the photos by Kieran Scott superb. There are around 90 recipes and most have multiple components, making them more restaurant fare than midweek supper. But the instructions are easy to follow and we're told they were all tested in a 50-year-old kitchen. With their impeccable pedigree, there's no doubt they will also taste delicious. What really makes this book special though are two things: that it is so uniquely New Zealand – the fish and shellfish species, the Maori lore, the childhood memories, the places and faces – and the comprehensive reference material it contains, from how to shuck a scallop (with photos) to how to help sustain our fisheries in the future. For all Kiwi anglers and seafood fans, Al Brown's homage to fish is a must-read. *Sally Butters*

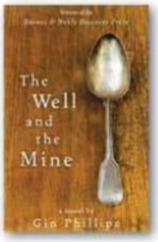
SHABBY CHIC INTERIORS

Rachel Ashwell

(publisher Cico Books, NZ distributor Southern Publishers Group, 192 pages, $74.99, hardback)

Rachel Ashwell, designer and self-made business woman, coined the term "shabby chic" 20 years ago when she set up shop in the well-heeled streets of Santa Monica. Her mix of beauty, comfort and function was refreshing, achievable and clever, and selling slip covers and flea market finds to the rich and famous has no doubt turned her piggy bank into a pretty silk purse. Today she's at the helm of multiple stores and a line of bedlinen and accessories as well as numerous books and her own TV show. *Shabby Chic Interiors: My Rooms, Treasures and Trinkets* is a celebration of Ashwell's signature style and her success. The book itself is beautiful – the photography shot in natural light, a soft consistent palette and subtle typography, all perfectly balanced. The first third of the book showcases Ashwell's LA home – roomy, vintage, pretty pastel colours. There's nothing new here, except for the barn she built out back. It's her flexible space: a simple traditional construction used to house a large area full of beds. Vintage pyjama parties perhaps? The behind-the-scenes section at the back of the book gives you a peek into the Shabby Chic workshop. The pages of lighting, window treatments, wallpaper and knick-knacks seem to be an attempt to add a useful element to your browsing, but the florid style of text left me unconvinced. After leafing through the Hollywood home of Ashwell's friend, or the pads once owned by Marilyn Monroe and fashion designer Betsey Johnson, I return to my favourite – Ashwell's beach cottage in Malibu. It's small, white, simple and I'm drawn to it like a moth to a vintage light bulb. As a lover of beautiful things, I'd buy the book for that alone. *Tracey Ellin is NZ House & Garden's art director* >

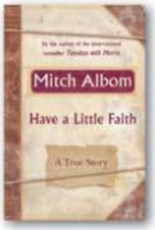
Hot picks this month at Poppies stores



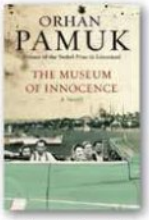
The Well and the Mine
by Gin Phillips
Published by Hachette

An assured, inspiring debut. Resonant, vivid and clear-eyed in its portrayal of both the best and the worst of human nature, *The Well and the Mine* is a stunning novel about love, hope and the importance of doing the right thing.

Have a Little Faith
by Mitch Albom
Published by Hachette



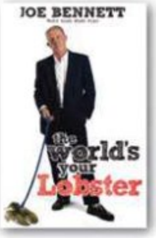
Will you do my eulogy? With those words, Mitch Albom begins his long-awaited return to non-fiction. His journey to honour the last request of a beloved clergyman ultimately leads him to rekindle his own long-ignored faith. As the cleric slowly lets go of life, Albom writes his final farewell, having learned that a faithful heart comes in many forms and places.



The Museum of Innocence
by Orhan Pamuk
Published by Allen & Unwin

Set in Istanbul between 1975 and today, this tells the story of Kemal, the son of one of Istanbul's richest families, and of his obsessive love for a poor and distant relation, the beautiful Fusun, who is a shop girl in a small boutique.

The World's Your Lobster
by Joe Bennett
Published by HarperCollins



Joe Bennett's erudite and wryly amusing commentaries on the foibles and eccentricities of modern life qualify him as one of our best-loved grouches. He finds much to complain about, much to condemn and, occasionally and always entertainingly, something to praise – which usually involves a dog or two. One for the fans that is sure to also win him new ones.

Poppies

'My kind of bookshop'

www.poppiesbooks.co.nz

Titles reviewed in this month's *NZ House & Garden* book review section available at Poppies stores.

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ESSENTIALLY FRENCH

Josephine Ryan

(publisher Ryland Peters & Small, NZ distributor Southern Publishers Group, 160 pages, $59.99, hardback)

Over the last few years there's been a strong resurgence of interest in the well-worn and individually crafted. That's an interest the author of *Essentially French*, Josephine Ryan, obviously shares. Brought up in Ireland, with French roots on her mother's side, Ryan is now an antiques dealer based in London, drawing her stock and her reputation as a stylist mainly from France (she is also the author of the best-selling *French Home*). "I love my job," she announces in her introduction. It shows. In fact, this beautiful book documents a collection of homes owned and lovingly stocked by other antiques dealers. Most of the other dealers are French (though not all, a few even live in England), and most of them live in the south of France, where Ryan herself maintains a second home that takes pride of place in these pages. Divided into the categories Simple French, Elegant French and Eclectic French, the interiors range from a "slightly foxed" London townhouse that blends styles and centuries to a colourful Gallic paean to the 1950s; from a rustic, traditional farmhouse to an elegant Parisian apartment. Despite this diversity, there is a collective "Frenchness" about them and it's as much in the colours, the fabrics, the objets trouvés and their arrangement as in the recognisably French furniture and accessories. Ryan describes these homeowners as an idiosyncratic bunch (even down to their names: Appley Hoare, Jean-Louis Fages, Spencer Swaffer, to name but a few) and their houses reflect that, along with character, curiosity and warmth. As Ryan says of discovering her own home in the Gard region of southern France (which apparently has "the charm and beauty of Provence but without the glitz"): "the house sang out to me". It's a beguiling tune.

Jan Chilwell is a NZ House & Garden sub-editor

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Music

Kate Mead listens for the latest sounds

OSVALDO GOLIJOV: OCEANA

DG 477 6426

Like Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji, the second of this month's two composers (see below), Osvaldo Golijov is a "global soul", travelling and living far and wide, making music coloured by diverse cultures. The thrumming guitar and lapping waves at the opening of the key work on this disc, *Oceana*, place us beachside as the voice of Luciana Souza floats into the soundscape. The solo vocal rises in waves of intensity to become a multitude of voices singing the sensual words of Chilean poet Pablo Neruda in lush harmony. Later, Souza scats like sunshine sparkling on the sea. Golijov's music is both innovative and traditional and the next work on the disc – *Tenebrae*, played by the Kronos Quartet – moves through recognisable fields of harmony without resorting to pastiche. And then there are the *Three Songs*, written for Golijov's muse, Dawn Upshaw, and Sally Potter's verse, communing with the rolling waves of Offenbach's famous barcarolle.

KAIKHOSRU SHAPURJI SORABJI: VILLA TASCA/PASSEGGIATA VENEZIANA

Jonathan Powell (piano)
Altarus AIR-CD 9067

The opening motifs of Sorabji's *Passeggiata Veneziana* pick up the sway of the gondoliers punting their way along Venice's canals to the same barcarolle from Offenbach's opera *The Tales of Hoffman*. Like Golijov, Sorabji could take an established, beloved melody and imbue it with something all his own. Sorabji's music sounds modern, but not in an unapproachable or austere sense. His exotic *Gulistan* (*The Rose Garden*) is my favourite. His love of diverse sounds stems from his upbringing. Raised in England, he had a Parsi father and a Spanish-Sicilian mother and it is to her we can look for the inspiration behind the hour-long *Villa Tasca*. As his music tumbles from the fingers of pianist Jonathan Powell, listeners will find themselves magically surrounded by the waters of the Mediterranean. ■

Kate Mead is production manager at Radio New Zealand Concert

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Virtually there

Kim Rutter goes camping in the comfort of cyberspace

SO WHAT ARE your plans for the summer break? Lying on a beach in the Caribbean? Diving at the Great Barrier Reef? Skiing in Whistler, BC? Visiting your in-laws in Whakatane? My wonderful husband, cyclist and wine buff that he is, told me that he had booked me my perfect holiday – a week watching the Tour Down Under and visiting vineyards in Adelaide (**tinyurl.com/yj7ghj5**). Lovely thought, but he absent-mindedly forgot that I'm a non-cycling teetotaller. Last time I went to Adelaide it was shut and we had to hang around on the tarmac until someone found a cleaner to open the airport, but even a week in Adelaide is better than spending the summer camping.

I hate camping. Why would I spend the year making the kitchen perfect and the bathrooms divine, only to spend my precious holiday crouching over a gas burner and wearing jandals in communal showers? Why would I walk all day without shops to go to? However, if you should find yourself with no option in the matter (house burned down, new outdoorsy boyfriend to impress, hiding from the law), I suggest you at least take these essentials to make it bearable.

Let's start with the tent. My recommendation is the Indaba tent from Australian outfit Luxury Tents (**tinyurl.com/ygg9z44**). It has a tolerable 48sqm of floor area, with wooden doors, glass windows and chandelier optional. Louis Vuitton does a nice line in camping furniture. My favourite is a fold-out bed in a suitcase (first made in 1878 for a Congo explorer). You can find it at **tinyurl.com/ya2x3xk**. Follow the links to Services>SpecialOrders>Custom Made>From Past to Present to find the birthday cake box and the Stokowski desk trunk (1936), both of which I know will come in handy.

Even more important, Zodi (**tinyurl.com/yhlmfmz**) make ducted tent heaters for those cooler evenings, and portable hot showers with tented surrounds for the more modest among us. And what about the toilets I hear you ask? Sorry, I'm not even going there. If you must, look at **tinyurl.com/yzshl8n**. Don't say I didn't warn you – I'm just not eating till I get home.

If you didn't have the foresight to have all your food catered, you just might have to cook. The best-ever ultimate camp cooking appliance, from camping mail order super-store Cabela's, is the outdoor turkey deep-fryer (**tinyurl.com/yzayxeo**). I have often thought how fine it would be to relax at the end of a hard day's camping by deep-frying a turkey. I'd have a Fireflye drink bottle lantern (drink and illuminate simultaneously) from Guyot Designs (**tinyurl.com/yfalrag**).

They also make an easy-to-pack campers' Squishy Pet Bowl. For the finishing touch to a perfect meal, how about a Mypressi Twist portable espresso machine (**tinyurl.com/cf5qav**)? The pressure comes from nitrous oxide cartridges so, if it all becomes too much, you can ditch the coffee entirely and just go with the gas.

After dinner, imagine the scene: relaxing on Kathmandu's inflatable camping sofa (**tinyurl.com/yg3coxs**) and watching your favourite TV from around the world thanks to the VuQube portable satellite TV antenna (**tinyurl.com/yg9bypl**). Or listen to your fave tunes through the Regen solar-powered iPod sound dock (**tinyurl.com/yhc76dc**) – vital when you have had just about all you can take of the sounds of nature. Even better, a campfire singalong with your neat slimline Backpacker guitar (**tinyurl.com/4nmbb**). Or not.

Maybe the answer is to contract out the whole business. Glamping (glamorous camping) is the next big thing and **GoGlamping.net** is a great place to peruse luxury camping holidays from around the world. Just think, if you can pay someone to set up the luxury camp for you, maybe you can pay someone to go as well.

Save your fingers: find these website links at nzhouseandgarden.co.nz

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shop window

The latest in shopping news from around the country

LIVE BEAUTIFULLY, SLEEP STYLISHLY

Thread Design, the well-known New Zealand designer bedlinen company, launched in 2001, now has its own flagship store at 274 Richmond Road, Grey Lynn, Auckland. The store stocks a wide range of products, including Ashley & Co home fragrances, Sarah Priddy candles, hand cream and hand wash, Thread Design baby and kids' ranges, Bob McDonald furniture, lampshades and much more. Its new French Stripe bedlinen range works from the country to the city and mixes effortlessly with florals, prints and solid colours. It comes in two colourways of black and white and ruby and white and is in-store now. There is also a gorgeous new deco velvet buttoned quilt, which comes in five colours: black, snow, raspberry, pewter and coffee.

Thread Design is open Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm, and Saturday, 10am-4pm. Contact Thread Design on (09) 360 1361 or www.threaddesign.co.nz

MAGICAL MOROCCAN LIGHTING (THE SOUQ)

An enchanting new shop has opened its doors in Rotorua. The Souq is the only shop in New Zealand to specialise in unique and magical Moroccan lighting. Their dazzling selection of brass, copper, nickel, iron, tin and henna lights are all handcrafted by skilled artisans in Morocco. The Souq also stocks a treasure trove of beautiful hand-woven fabrics in vibrant colours, gorgeous ceramics from Fez, Sale and Marrakesh, as well as enchanting Arabian-styled mirrors, tagines and more. Allow yourself to be seduced by the charm and magic of Moroccan decor.

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urban eye

What's hot in cities around the country

AUCKLAND

SHELLEY BRIDGEMAN

1 LONELY DOG GALLERY

Serious collectors and casual passers-by alike are attracted to this gallery space featuring a dapper, besuited canine in dark glasses and shiny wing-tipped shoes. Lonely Dog – LD to his friends – is a guitar-playing jazz and blues musician and sometime biker, celebrated here in a series of limited-edition prints, bronzes and books. They're the work of Queenstown-based artist Ivan Clarke, who conceived the character, his hound friends and the realistic world they inhabit. And now, since Warner Bros have acquired the film rights, the silver screen beckons.

20 Customs St East, Britomart, (09) 550 7170

2 CRAVE

Opened in September by Jude Turner, a self-described "accomplished shopper and lover of beautiful things", this store offers a selection of merchandise from New Zealand and the world. Quirky items such as 3D puzzles and Sea Bags (tote bags made of recycled sails) sit alongside Ruby & Sol vintage cushions and coathangers, Emma Green toiletries and jewellery by Mimi and Me. There's something for everyone here: rattles for the baby; seedling packages for children; Kimmidoll notebooks for teens; scented candles, quilts and crockery for the home. Soon to become a destination store for discerning shoppers.

219 Hinemoa St, Birkenhead, (09) 419 9535

3 COASTAL DESIGN CO

Launched on Waiheke Island in 2006, this range of synthetic rattan outdoor furniture in soothing shades of chocolate, silver and sand dune reflects the laid-back New Zealand lifestyle. There are pieces here for dining, socialising or relaxing; the deck, the garden or poolside. Swivel armchairs are the best sellers. Also in the range: modular sofas and the super-comfortable open-weave hanging Egg chair – available with or without a stand. The Snake, comprising 10 seats and a round table, can be configured in an S-shape, a perfect circle or even as a question mark. Inspired!

24 Garfield St, Parnell, (09) 365 2726, coastaldesign.co.nz

WELLINGTON

ANN PACKER

4 ART EXPLORER SCULPTURE TRAIL

The capital has long been known for its sculpture, from Neil Dawson's iconic fern-wrapped globe suspended over Civic Square to newer wind-generated artworks on the road to the airport. Two new guides targeted at school-age kids should get them out discovering hidden gems such as Chris Booth's *Silent People* – hiding in cabbage trees outside the library – as well as learning more about public beauties including Paul Dibble's *Fruits of the Garden* and Tanya Ashken's *Albatross*, overlooking the lagoon in Frank Kitts Park. Facts and anecdotes about the stunning concrete text sculptures that make up the waterfront Writers' Walk are also featured.

The guides are available from galleries, libraries and downloadable from citygallery.org.nz

5 BOOK FEAST

It's hard to believe Yvonne Bassett's foodie treasure trove has been open for four whole years now. Just about every cooking style, famous chef and national cuisine is featured in her spacious corner shop in the historic Jackson Street Precinct. Growing what you cook is hot, as is baking (this Christmas really will be a baker's delight). Encouraging kids is part of the deal and Yvonne has all the extras you might want to give a cook, from gorgeous biscuit tins to padded cotton pohutukawa-motif tea cosies.

173 Jackson St, Petone, (04) 576 0486, bookfeast.com

6 CULTURED

Wendy Adams – who, with husband Conrad, runs the bright red Espresso Rescue caravan that pops up in markets around Wellington – is so enthusiastic about cheese she's studying to become a cheese master. Meanwhile she has opened a shop in Petone to showcase as many of the country's artisan cheesemakers as possible – think Cwmglyn and Kingsmeade from the Wairarapa, Sherrington Grange from the Marlborough Sounds, Hawke's Bay's Hohepa, Blue River Dairy from Invercargill and Putaruru's Over the Moon. There's also fresh ricotta from local Wellington producer Zany Zeus and yoghurt and ice cream too. We won't go on!

185 Jackson St, Petone, cultured.co.nz

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NELSON

JACQUETTA BELL

7 THE FREE HOUSE

The Free House opened last year and is "free" because it has no ties to a brewery. It serves a changing menu of local and national craft beers, such as The Twisted Hop Honey Dew lager, Emerson's Bookbinder and Mussel Inn Captain Cooker. The Free House has quickly become a community centre – you'll find Irish musos there every Tuesday, poetry readings on the last Monday of the month and dozens of happy punters on a summer night, having a froth-blowing good time.
96 Collingwood St, Nelson, (03) 548 9391, thefreehouse.co.nz

8 SWEDISH BAKERY & CAFE

The Swiss do baking and the Swedish are better known for… swedes? This has to be more of a PR problem than a pastry issue. At the Swedish Bakery the croissants are light and buttery, the kaffebröd (cinnamon bun) is spicy, the cream-filled rolled meringue Budapest is becoming a dinner party staple in Nelson and the light rye sourdough bread is just the thing to take on a picnic, along with some local Neudorf cheese or smoked fish from Mapua. Then there are Björn Svensson's handmade chocolates and the bakery's own delicious biskvi and tosca – traditional (and decadent) Swedish confections.
54 Bridge St, (03) 546 8685

9 SOUTH STREET GALLERY

Take a step back in time with a wander down South Street, just a few steps from the Cathedral Hill, where colonial cottages have survived intact as a slice of settler life – sans smells and horses. The first cottage was built in 1863, with the rest added soon after. Part of the area used to be a market garden and the South Street Gallery, on the corner, was a builder's business in its early days. It's now a great one-stop shop for top local ceramics – ideal for those who don't have time for studio visits in the country.
10 Nile St West, (03) 548 8117, nelsonpottery.co.nz

CHRISTCHURCH

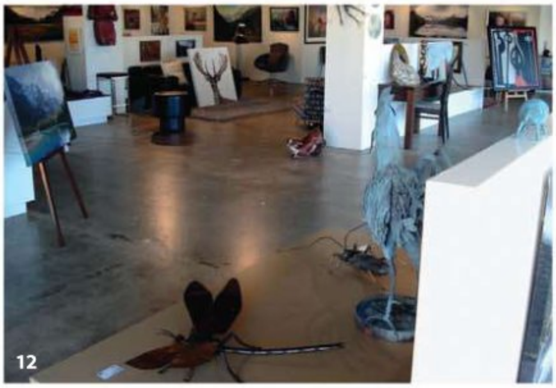
LEE SUCKLING

10 GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!

If you're on the hunt for the perfect pop art Queen Elizabeth II portrait, a crown-themed tea towel set or a royal commemoration mug, God Save the Queen! should be your destination of choice. Just off the main street in the port town of Lyttelton, it offers a mix of new and used homewares and bric-a-brac with a British theme, plus a range of antique flags, nautical knick-knacks and inexpensive plastic toys and other gifts for children.
5c Oxford St, Lyttelton, (03) 328 8399

11 THE HEADLESS MEXICAN

Tucked at the back of Sumner's Nayland Street Village Mall is a relaxed neighbourhood eatery called The Headless Mexican. As the name suggests, the large menu features casual Mexican fare – including chimichangas, quesadillas and tacos – plus a range of light desserts from the cabinet. Wrought-iron screens and booth seating break up the tight space into even cosier nooks, with hanging sombreros and chandeliers adding atmosphere. Enjoy one of the Latin cocktails on offer at their Margarita Lounge – the white crème de cacao martini is a standout.
41 Nayland St, Sumner, (03) 326 6899



12 ALEXIS FINE ART GALLERY

When Canadian Alexis Brown moved to our corner of the earth several years ago, she fell in love with New Zealand art. She opened her own gallery on Colombo Street in late 2008, after travelling around the Canterbury region sourcing artworks from established and emerging artists. Alexis Fine Art Gallery still stocks only local artwork, from lifelike Kees Bruin paintings to handcrafted dining tables by Christchurch joiners Evolution Furniture. New pieces are added on a weekly basis; they also have interior consultants who can come to your home or workplace and source pieces to suit your personality and budget.
359 Colombo St, Sydenham, (03) 365 5800

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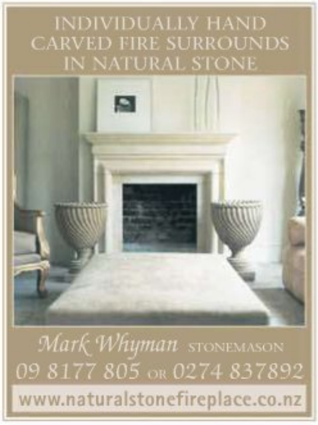

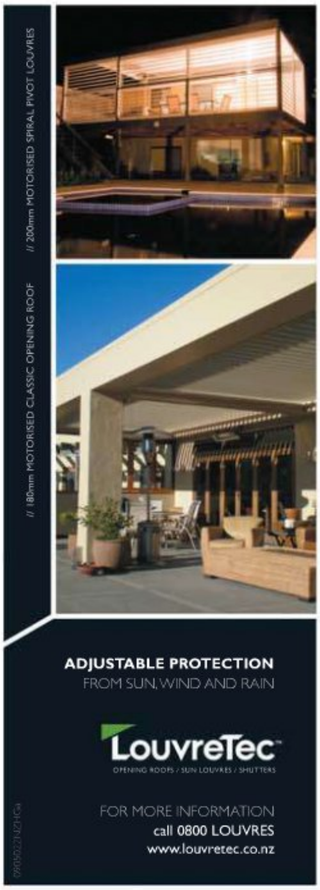

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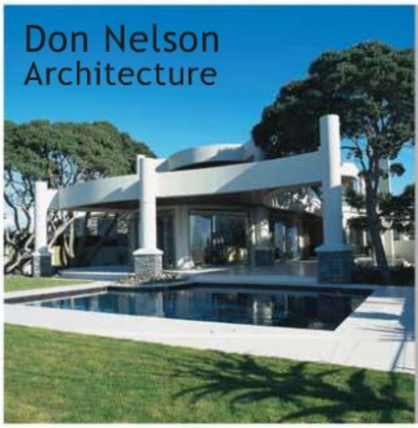

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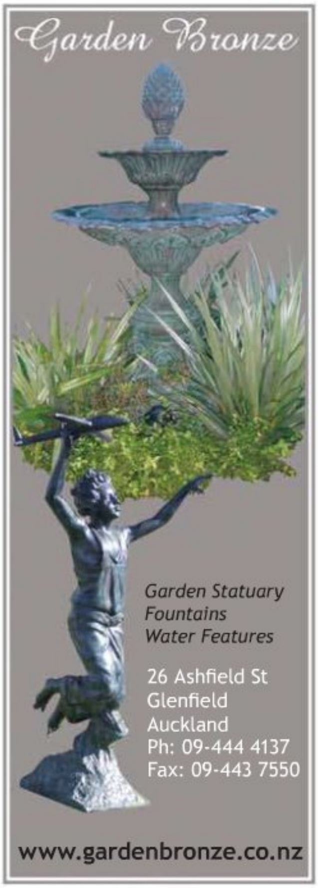

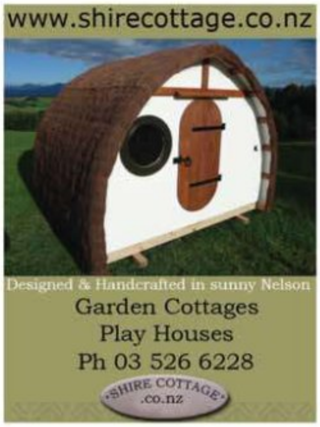

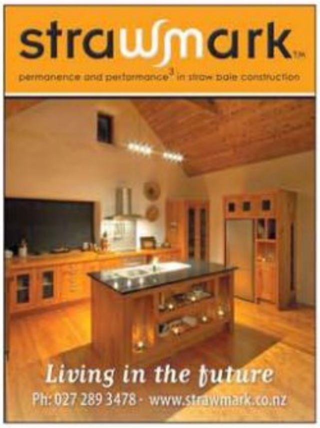

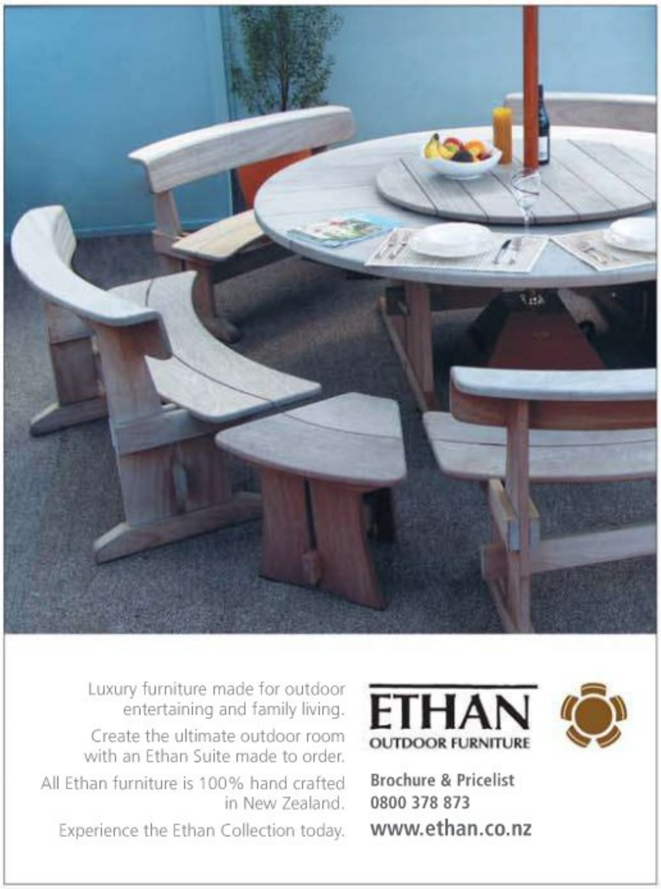

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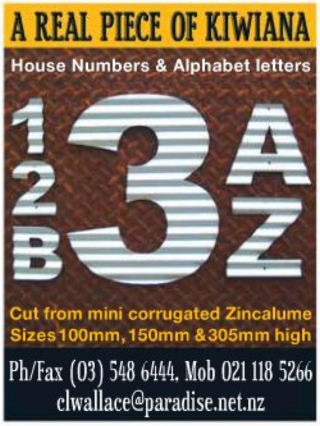

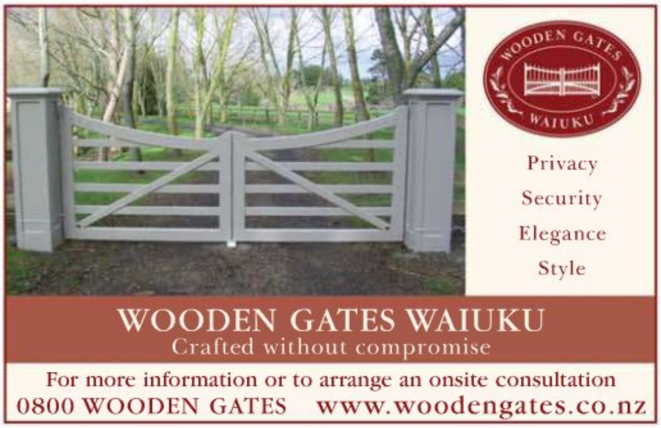

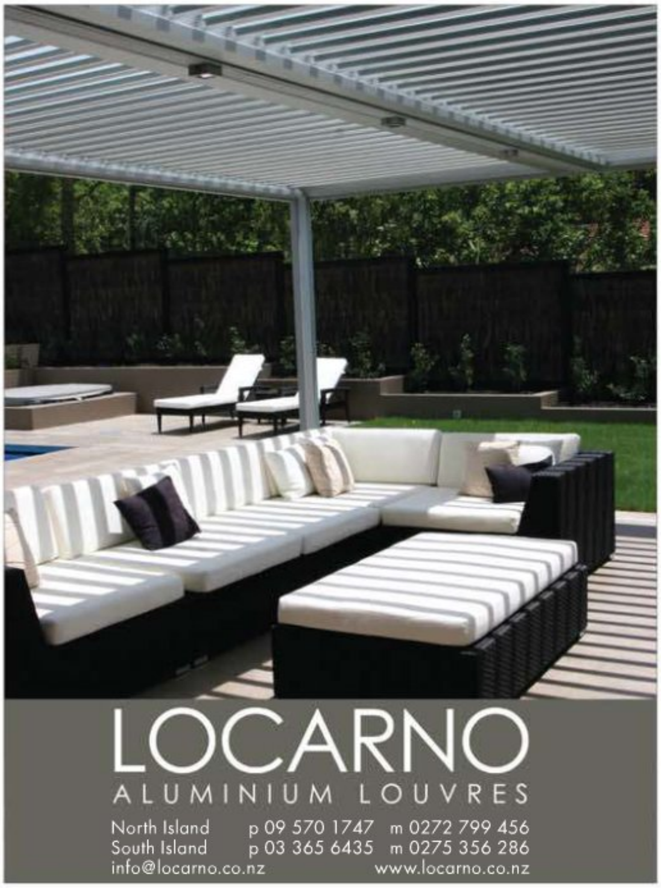

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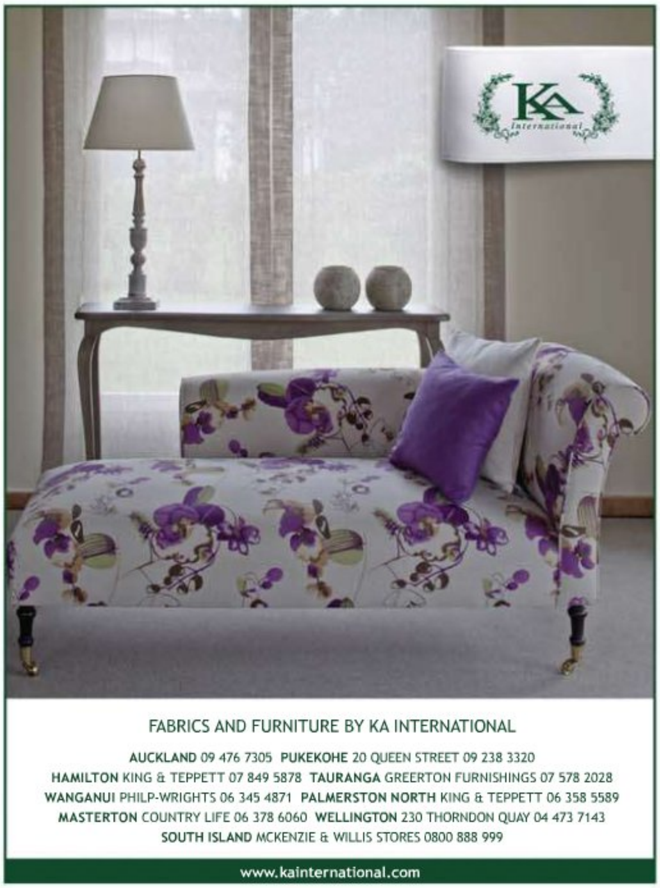

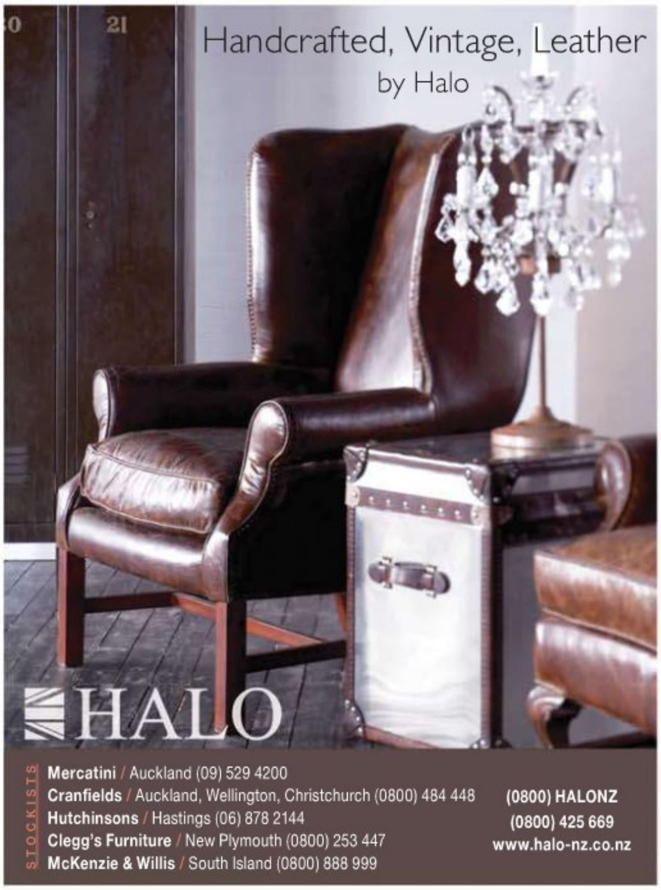

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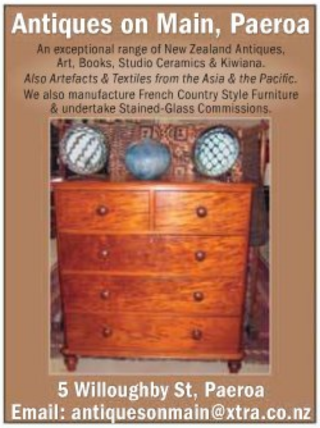

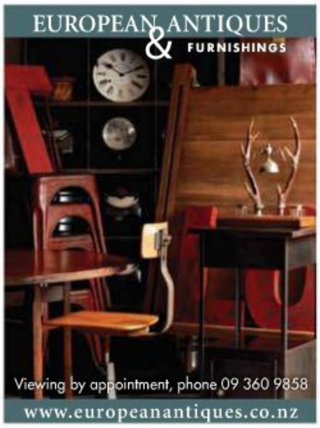

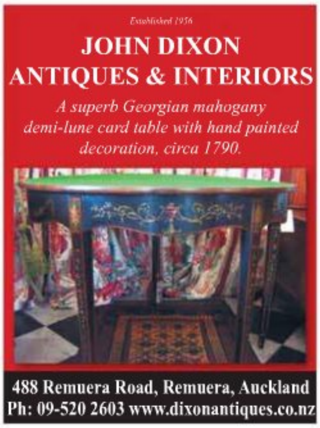

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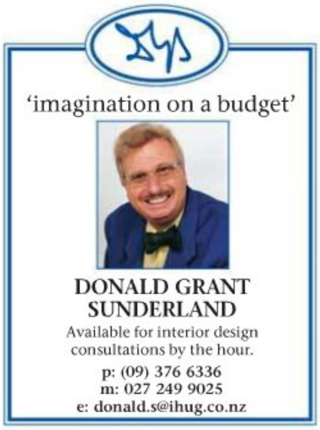

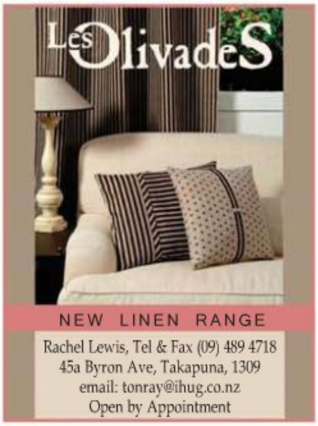

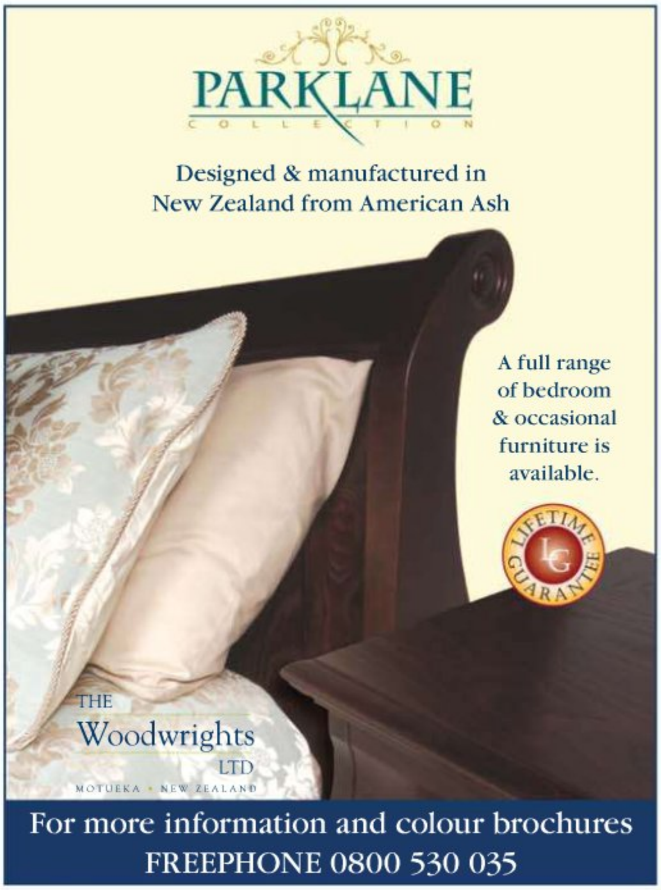

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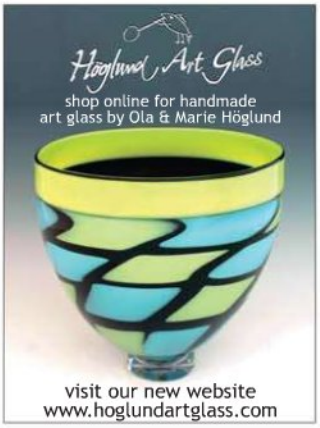

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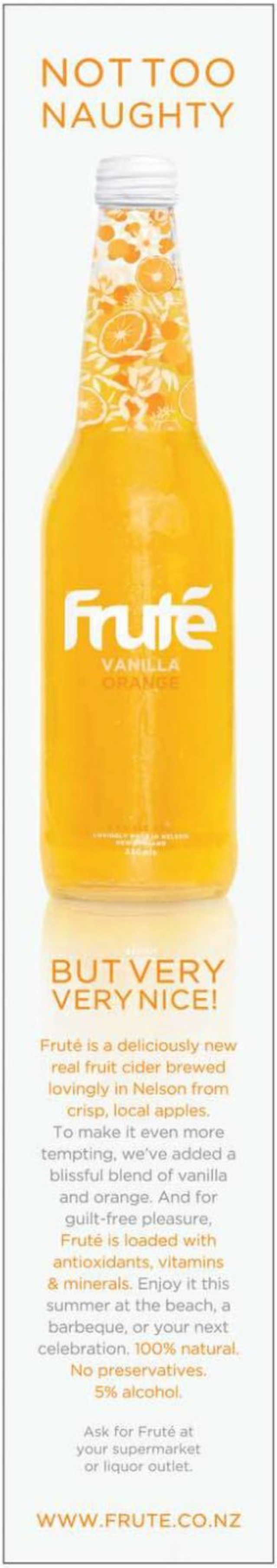

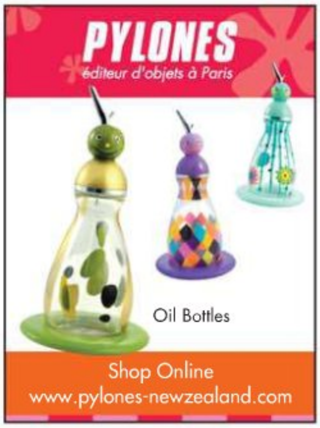

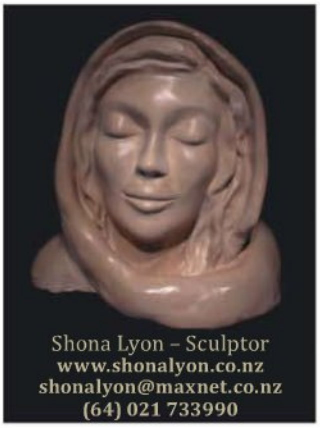

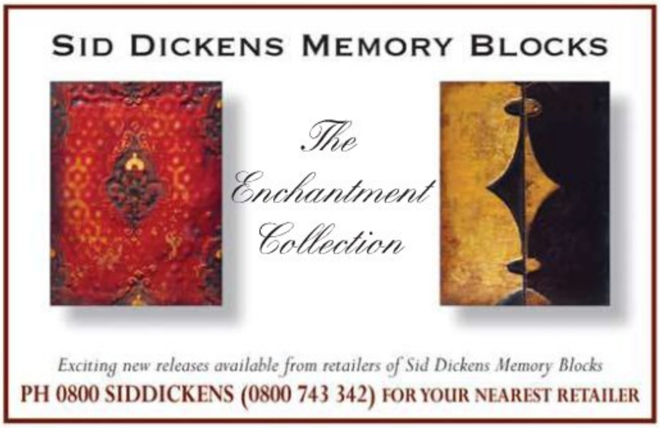

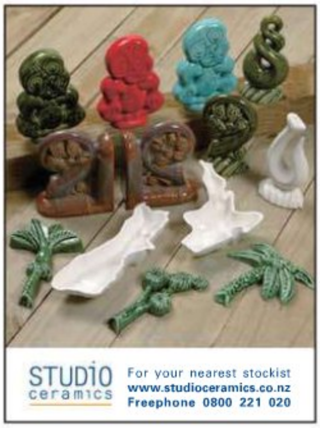

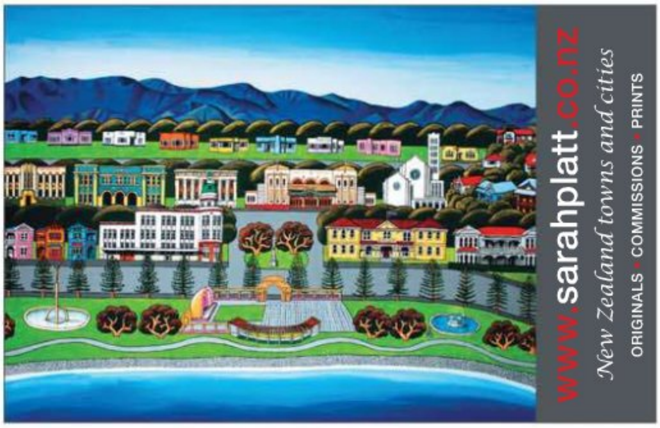

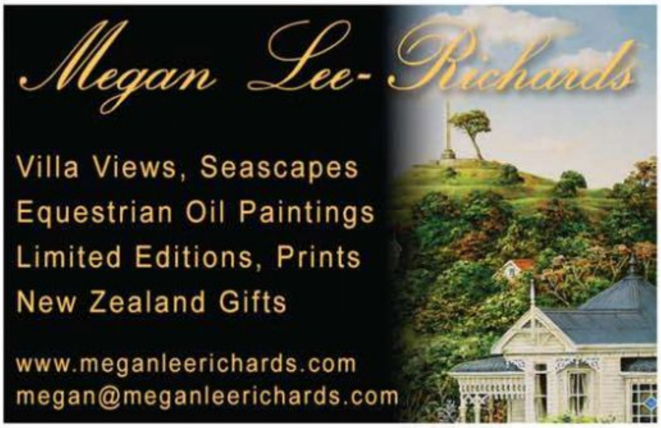

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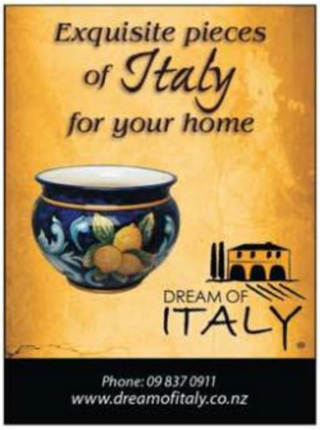

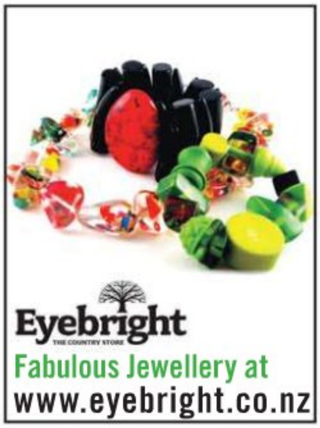

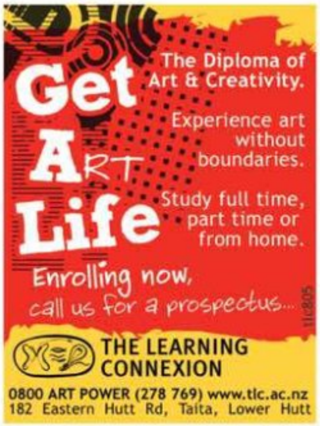

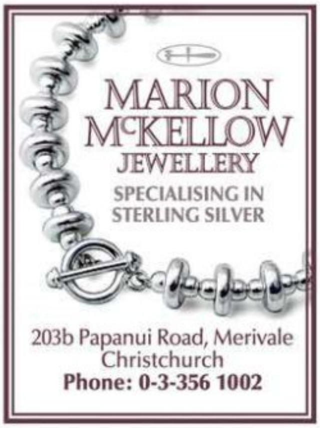

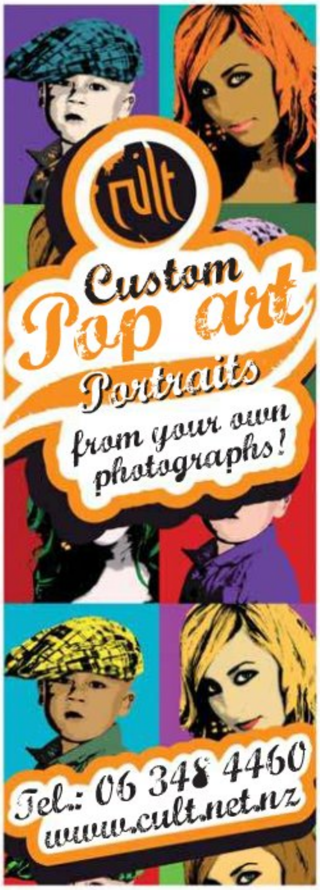

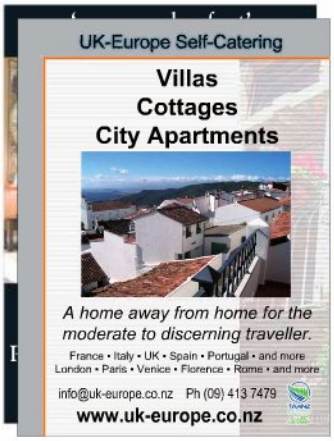

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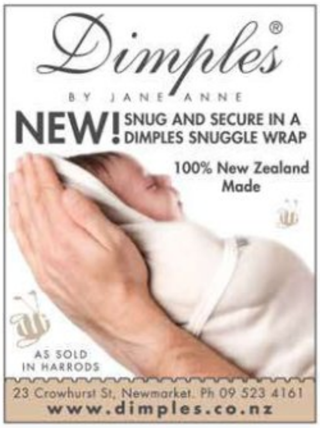

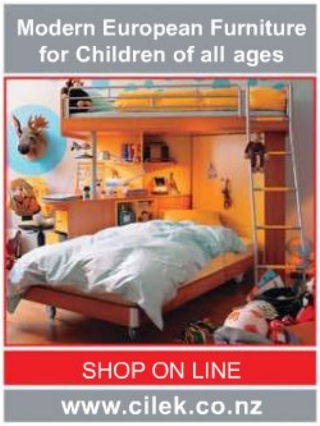

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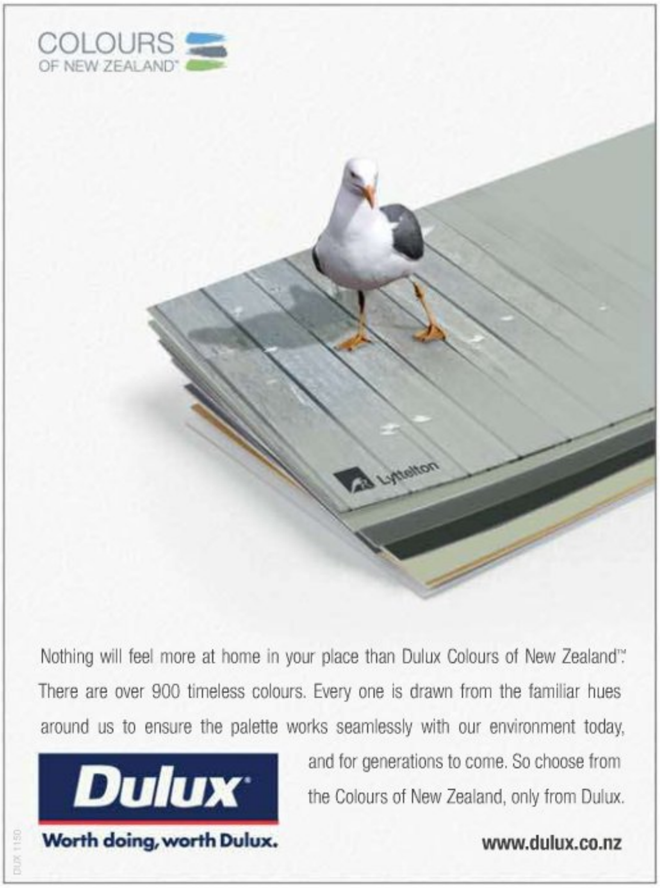

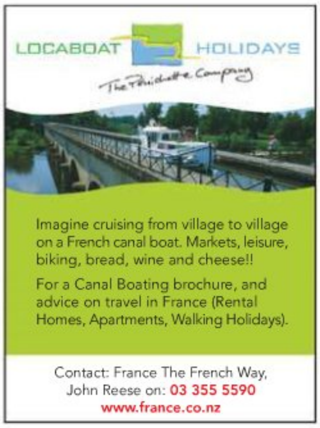

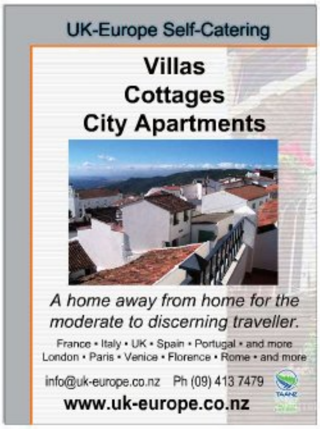

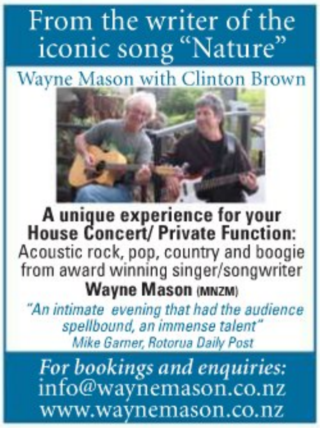

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extra

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FREEDOM'S NEW WEBSITE

Freedom's website has a stylish new look and, with the introduction of product search, it is now even easier to use. Visit www.freedomfurniture.co.nz today to register for exclusive offers and all the latest news.

NZ STEEL

Building a home framed with Axxis® Steel allows a high standard of finish. To discover the quality finish available with steel, and how it can benefit your next new home, visit www.axxis.co.nz.

DULUX PAINT

Whether your exterior project is big or small, use Dulux Weathershield X10. It gives a tough finish for long-life protection and a 10-year guarantee against blistering, peeling and flaking. See www.dulux.co.nz, 0800 4 DULUX.

UNIQUE FABRICS

Andrew Martin delivers yet another quirky and cool offering of fabrics with their new collection 'The Beatles'. Available now from Unique Fabrics; 0800 UNIQUE or see www.uniquefabrics.com.

DEDON SPECIAL EDITION

Fashion meets furniture! The special limited-edition Dedon Dress Code reinterprets four of fashion's most classic patterns for the Dedon Slim Line collection by Jean-Marie Massaud. Shown here is Cambon, limited to only 1961 pieces – a number inspired by the classic 1961 film *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. See www.domo.co.nz.

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Events

This month's events calendar

NATIONWIDE

AUCKLAND SEAFOOD FESTIVAL

Saturday, January 30 to Monday, February 1.

Come along to the fourth annual Auckland Seafood Festival on Auckland Anniversary weekend to celebrate the New Zealand seafood industry and help support a good cause. All profits go to the Stellar Trust for their Rise above P campaign battling methamphetamine use in New Zealand. Sample delicious seafood and wines from Glengarry's vineyard collection and enjoy the entertainment. Tickets are on sale now through i-Ticket.

For more information visit aucklandseafoodfestival.co.nz or contact David Savidan, 021 607 177, sav@trendmill.co.nz.

WAIKATO FOOD, WINE AND JAZZ FESTIVAL

Saturday and Sunday, February 27-28.

Rose Gardens, Hamilton. Celebrate the final weekend of the 12th annual Waikato Times Hamilton Garden Arts Festival and enjoy great food and wine in the Rose Gardens. Both ticketed and free events cater for a wide range of audiences. Highlights include family events, visual art, theatre, music, readers and writers, contemporary dance and much more. Jazz music will be played from 10am on Saturday and Sunday.

For more information or to register your business, visit waikatotimes.co.nz.

TOAST TO THE COAST

January 29-30, 10am-4pm.

For this exciting new house tour in the Whakatane district, 10 stunning coastal homes will open their doors in support of Hospice Eastern Bay of Plenty (see page 68 of *NZ House & Garden*, December issue). Properties range from award-winning absolute beachfront to bush-veiled gems. Expect to be wowed!

Contact Lynda on 0274 328 833, or visit toasttothecoast.co.nz.

WINE COUNTRY GALLERY @ ELEPHANT HILL WINERY

Opening Friday, January 29, 5.30pm; running to February 17, 10am-4pm daily.

Elephant Hill Winery, 86 Clifton Rd, Te Awanga, Hawke's Bay. Works by Jane Gray, Reuben Friend, Israel Birch, Mary Woodford, Tim Wigmore, Jody Hope Gibbons, Virginia Leonard, Justin Kite, Ema Scott, John Pule, Shane Cotton, Steuart Welch and many more. See page 26 of this issue.

For more information contact Jane Gray, 021 245 8500, winecountrygallery.com.

GREYTOWN ARTS FESTIVAL

January 23-25.

Greytown will be alive with music, arts and performance, including free events in the main street and parks. Highlights include: the Wellington International Ukulele Orchestra (Saturday, January 23, Kurunui College Performing Arts Centre); an exhibition of Greytown artists (Town Hall, January 23-31); an outdoor auction of decorated deckchairs; and an art trail showcasing Wairarapa artists in some of the most picturesque local homes and gardens in town. Also lots of events for children, including a Lego design and build competition, and a digital art and photography exhibition.

For more information, visit greytownartsfestival.co.nz.

WOLLASTON NELSON JAZZ & BLUES FESTIVAL

January 2-9.

This year's festival takes in more than 60 events and 100 performers in many different locations such as parks, streets, restaurants and vineyards. Featured artists include Emma Pask, the Blues Party, Billy TK Jr, Torch Songs, Joe Robinson, Fiona Pears and the Winch Brothers.

For more information, visit nelsonjazzfest.co.nz or contact Rowena Richards-Orange, (03) 547 7211.

NZ HOUSE & GARDEN TOURS 2010

Christchurch: Friday, March 5; Auckland: Friday, March 12; Wellington: Friday, March 19; Omaha/Matakana: Friday, March 26.

Step inside the pages of *NZ House & Garden* as homes around the country open their doors for the *NZ House & Garden Tours* in support of the Cancer Society of New Zealand and Look Good Feel Better. Tickets are $55 each and are on sale from December 18 at Ticketmaster, ticketmaster.co.nz, 0800 111 999 or (09) 970 9700, or from your local outlet.

For more information see nzhouseandgarden.co.nz.

Advertise your community event free of charge in *NZ House & Garden*: send details to ellie.trotter@nzhouseandgarden.co.nz

THE NELSON MAIL TEDDY BEARS' PICNIC

Sunday, January 17, noon-2.30pm.

Isel Park, Stoke. It's picnic time for all the family. Bring your cuddly friends. All the fun of an old-fashioned fair with games, a teddy disco for wild bears, petting animals, food stalls, a museum for quiet reflective bears, sand saucers and lots of other things for teddy to do – we've bearly started! Bring a picnic.

CHRISTCHURCH WORLD BUSKERS' FESTIVAL

Thursday, January 21 to Sunday, January 31.

Enjoy 11 nights and 10 days of performances at Australasia's largest street theatre festival. All shows are free, but audiences are encouraged to donate into the hat after each event.

For further information, phone (03) 377 2365 or visit worldbuskersfestival.com.

BROOKLANDS GALA, CHRISTCHURCH

January 23, 10.30am-4pm.

Brooklands Domain, 20 minutes' drive from central Christchurch. This is part of the Christchurch City Council Summertime programme. Come for a fun day out with compere Ollie Ohlson leading the entertainment, featuring activities, games, displays and 50 produce and craft stalls. Free entry.

For more information contact Geoff, (03) 329 2001.

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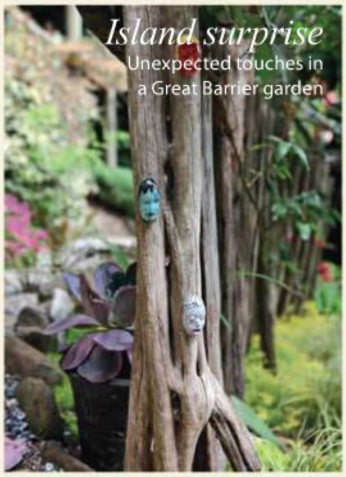
Next month in NZ HOUSE & GARDEN



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Light hearted

The question

I would love a chandelier in my home. What are the important considerations?

The expert

Artist Sharon Finn owns an Auckland store, Sharondelier, which sparkles with custom-designed chandeliers, mannequins and bird cages embellished with crystals and vintage jewellery. She also designs lighting for concerts and mosaic works.

Sharon Finn recently exhibited her handmade chandeliers, cages and "lady frames" in Sydney.

The answer

• You can hang a chandelier anywhere. Don't restrict your thinking to the biggest rooms in the house: there's something magical about luxuriating in a bath at night with a chandelier overhead, twinkling away. I also love them in the bedroom – I've got two in mine and use the dimmer to get the light just right. Lots of my clients put them in the stairwell. You can have long, magnificent chandeliers there because it's a wide-open space. You need to be practical when you hang one up high though, in terms of being able to change the bulb. A pulley system, ladder or handy hubby is essential.

• Create some magic outside. In my last house, I had three chandeliers on the verandah. They threw gorgeous prisms all over the place, day and night. It doesn't matter if you've got a traditional or modern house; don't be afraid to mix up your look. Covered conservatories are ideal too – anywhere that's not too windy, because crystals have a habit of chipping when they crack together. The most unusual place I've seen a chandelier hung was outside in a tree.

• Chandeliers are more robust than they look. You can customise them to your home's style or colour scheme. I take traditional chandeliers apart, have them rewired and then rework them, using vintage brooches and crystals. Each one I make is unique. The ones I have in stock now range in size from 28cm wide and 45cm high to 98cm by 2.5m, and cost $1800 to $14,000. If you take care of the practicalities – having a good steam extractor in the bathroom, hanging it over a table where you've got a low ceiling – you can have one in every room in the house.

See Sharon's collections at sharondelier.com

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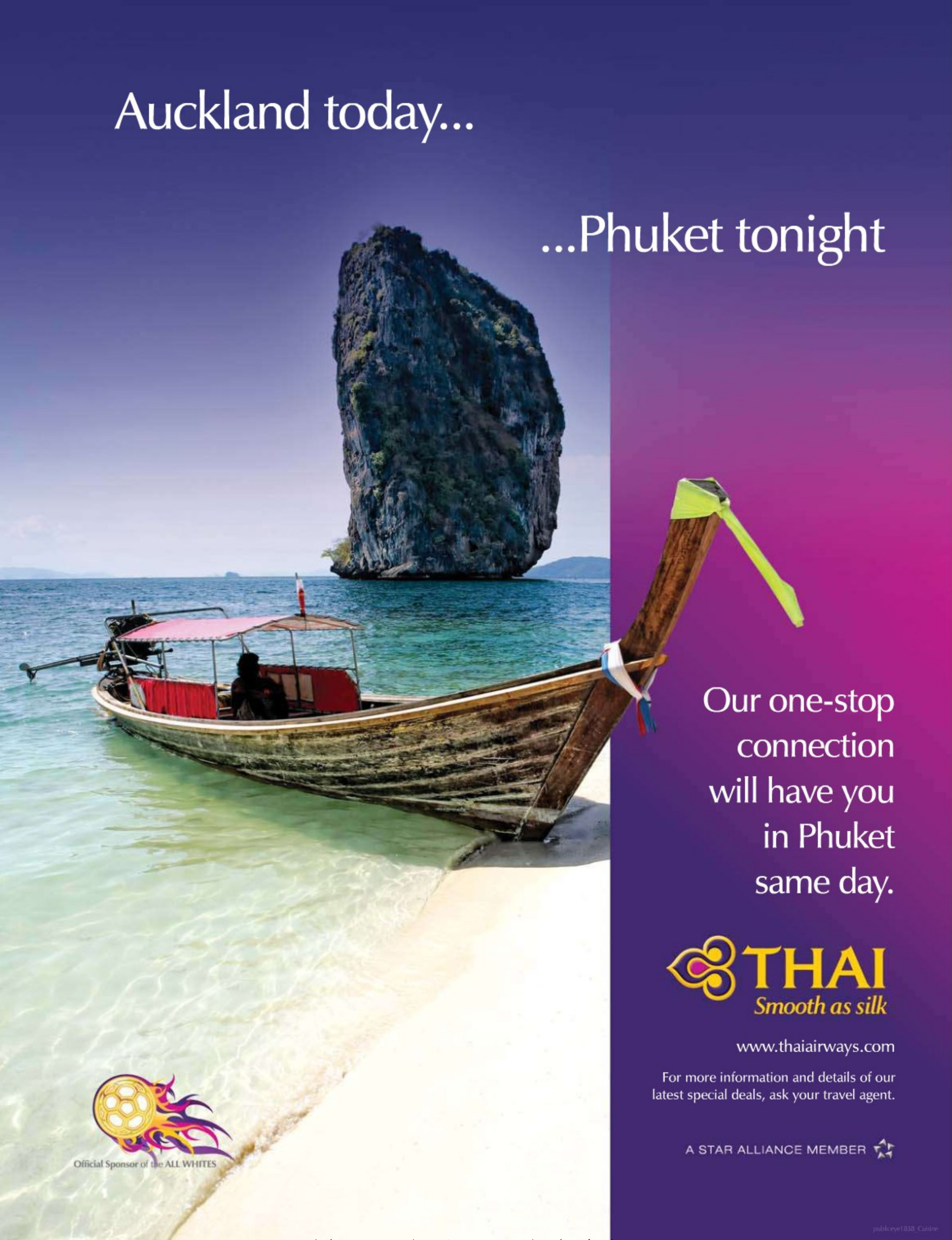

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